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The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXL NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 1935 No. 3645

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THE NATION. Published weekly at 20 Vesey St., New York. Entered as second class matter December 13, 1887, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., and under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright, 1935, by the Nation, Inc.
Muriel C. Gray, Advertising Manager. Walter F. Grueninger, Circulation Manager. Cable Address: Nation, New York.

IN DECLARING the Railroad Retirement Act to be unconstitutional the Supreme Court has not only struck a blow at the security of a million railway employees, but challenged the very concept of security as a desirable social objective. The issue, as it is reflected in the majority and minority decisions, is in many respects the most fundamental one before our generation. Speaking for the majority, Justice Roberts was emphatic in pointing out that "the railroads . . . remain the private property of their owners, and their assets cannot be taken without just compensation." "The pension plan," he argued, "is an attempt for social ends to impose by sheer fiat non-contractual incidents upon the relation of employer and employee." While not denying that property owners possess certain rights, the minority declared that this argument neglected "the responsibilities which inhere in the carriers' enterprise . . . responsibilities [which] . . . cannot be regarded as confined to the contractual engagements." They asked what constitutional distinction could exist between compelling employers to grant reasonable compensation for injuries and "requiring a fair allowance for those who practically give their lives to the service and are incapacitated by the wear and tear of time." No one will question that in the society in which we live there is a constant conflict between profits and human welfare. In the case of the railroads, as with other enterprises, it is probably true to say that the profit system cannot function with full efficiency if human rights are held to be paramount. To this the obvious reply is: Why should a system be preserved which cannot meet the fundamental needs of mankind? Five men on the Supreme Bench have given another answer, but it is an answer of a generation that is already gone.

THE TRAGIC, NEEDLESS DEATH of Senator Bronson Cutting deprives the United States Senate of one of its most liberal and useful members. Only a few days before his end it was even suggested that progressive Republicans might turn to him for national leadership. The liberal group in the Senate was devoted to him; older men like Borah and Norris felt a personal attachment to him which made their unconcealed grief quite understandable. They had the most complete confidence in his rectitude and sincerity and had felt deeply outraged that the Administration apparently countenanced the effort of the Democratic candidate for the Senate, whom Mr. Cutting defeated last November, to unseat him. Still under fifty, Mr. Cutting was vigorous, fearless, and certain of six more years of increasingly valuable service. Especially in the battle for personal freedom will his loss be felt, for he was always ready to be called upon and eager to act against self-appointed censors and the denial of popular rights by officials faithless to their oaths of office. We shall not soon forget his fight against the censorship of books early in his Senatorial career, in which he routed the veteran Reed Smoot by his sarcasm, his wit, his direct and deadly attack. With fascist tendencies clearly in evidence, it is utterly deplorable to lose so outstanding a champion of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

A SPONTANEOUS and isolated outburst, the walkout at the Toledo transmission plant of General Motors has already caused the shutdown of assembly plants involving more than 30,000 workers and may give rise to consequences which will reverberate throughout the industry. Whether General Motors will agree to the demand for a pay increase is a minor issue in the dispute. The fundamental issue is whether General Motors can be forced to accept a signed contract granting recognition to an A. F. of L. union. Should the Toledo strikers succeed in winning such a contract, other locals of the United Automobile Workers may finally come to see that recognition is not something they can win by playing pressure politics in Washington or by campaigning for the dissolution of the Automobile Labor Board. They will learn that to get recognition they must direct their attack against the employer himself, making use of the only instrument by which he can effectively be budged. If the Toledo strikers are defeated, the situation will revert to the status quo ante, and the A. F. of L. will be free to pursue its beaten path of strategy—limited at the moment to a demand for the enactment of the Wagner labor-disputes bill. In any event, it may be taken for granted that the A. F. of L. will do all it

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can to localize the disturbances at Toledo. Mr. Green and his associates are even more reluctant to precipitate a nation-wide automobile strike today than they were in March, 1934. But a rank-and-file success at Toledo may unleash forces which will eventually break the hold of the A. F. of L. leaders over the United Automobile Workers.

GEORGE N. PEEK'S assertion that the United States was a net debtor in international settlements last year is so misleading as to cause one to question his sincerity in making it. Statistics are notoriously tricky, and the ability to interpret an international balance of payment is not widespread. But Mr. Peek's own figures show quite clearly that the United States, far from having a debtor balance, actually possessed a favorable balance on goods and services of $116,000,000 for 1934—rather more than in other recent years. In addition to meeting this obligation, foreign nations had to find means of paying the United States a net balance of $265,000,000 to meet interest and dividend charges on international investments. Thus our total credit balance, after all visible and invisible items are taken into account, was $381,000,000. In theory there are only two ways in which foreign countries could meet this obligation—by shipping gold or by borrowing in this country. But since the United States has practically ceased investing abroad, and has attracted an increased supply of foreign capital, the only course open was the shipping of gold. In all, the United States absorbed no less than $1,217,000,000 in gold during the year—nearly 6 per cent of the world's supply. If this gold were used as a basis for a proportionate expansion in American currency, there might be some prospect of an ultimate adjustment taking place. But as long as it is merely put back into the ground whence it came, the increased world scarcity can only result in further deflation in the gold countries and further unsettling of the American trade balance. We agree with Mr. Peek that it is high time for "a review of our national policies based on . . . our international credit status." But such a review, if honestly carried out, can lead to only one conclusion—that we shall have to make some provision for payment if we expect any profit from our creditor position.

THE SHIPPING INTERESTS learned little from their experience with the Nye committee. Despite a Presidential message asking that ship subsidies be made openly and that the mail contracts and construction loans be scrapped, they tried to slip through Congress a bill which perpetuated these methods while it purported to satisfy the President's request. The Bland-Copeland bill does take from the Post Office the power to make mail contracts, but it vests it instead with a special maritime authority. And it tries to open a back door to the Treasury for shipbuilders and shipping lines by authorizing the government to donate the difference in the cost of building ships at home and abroad, and to lend 80 per cent of the balance. Republicans and Democrats appeared in accord in rushing this bill through the House Committee on Merchant Marine, Radio, and Fisheries. Fortunately Congressman Edward C. Moran, Jr., of Maine appeared before the committee to register a stinging attack on the bill, exposed its purpose, made grave charges against the shipping interests, and succeeded in prolonging the hearing until the Farley report should come out. He was able to prove that the shipping interests had spent $150,000 in Washington to pass the subsidies of 1928, and then duly divided up the cost among them on a basis of benefits received. Under that measure $239,000,000 in ocean-mail contracts and construction loans are still outstanding and interest on many of the loans is in arrears. Mr. Moran proposed a system of government ownership of subsidized shipping, with private operation under charter, which the old-timers told him was "bolshevism."

IT IS NOT SURPRISING that the Japanese bogy should have been trotted out in connection with the Sakdalista uprising in the Philippines. How else can one explain why a group of Filipinos who have known the delights of American rule for thirty-five years should suddenly rise against their benefactors? Surely no one will claim that the United States has failed in its imperial role. The obvious answer must be that the rebels have been financed by Japan. The only difficulty with this convenient explanation is that it does not square with the facts. There is no evidence that the Sakdalistas are in the pay either of Tokyo or Moscow. It is a peasant revolt, directed as much against the Quezon-Osmeña coalition as against American rule. It has been motivated chiefly by discontent against exorbitant taxes, together with a desire for the immediate severing of all ties with the United States. That increased bitterness toward the United States should follow the passage of the Hawes-Cutting Act was to be expected, as its immediate effect is to curtail the market for Philippine products in the United States without conferring actual independence. Some Filipinos even question whether the United States has any intention of surrendering control of the islands at the end of the ten-year period. These suspicions may be unfair, but they are the natural result of our treatment of the Filipinos in the past.

BEFORE OUR LAST ISSUE was off the press, the President satisfied our curiosity as to what action would follow the statement of General F. M. Andrews that the United States must be prepared in an emergency to seize British and French islands near our shores. He repudiated General Andrews, also General Charles E. Kilbourne, who had made a like statement, and rebuked Chairman John J. McSwain of the House Military Affairs Committee for having allowed the testimony of the generals to be published. We commend the President's celerity, also his assertion that the testimony of the officers does not reflect the views, purposes, or motives of the United States government. But the rebuke to Mr. McSwain must puzzle the British and French governments. It is another way of saying that the misconduct consisted only in being found out. Surely the misconduct must be that generals in responsible positions in the army should make statements which do not reflect the views, purposes, and motives of the government, and Mr. McSwain's part in it is relatively innocent. We have no knowledge that the generals have suffered any punishment more painful than repudiation. To Mr. McSwain the President said crossly that if military secrets were not better guarded he would require officers to give testimony only after his approval of it. This threat should become a mater of policy, at least until the War Department learns to reflect the views, purposes, and motives of the government.

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ADVOCATES of collective security will find little to which they can justifiably take exception in the recently signed Franco-Soviet treaty of mutual assistance. Although the agreement is a bilateral one and as such reminiscent of the pre-war Franco-Russian alliance, it differs from the latter in several important respects. In the first place, great care has been exercised to fit the pact within the framework of existing collective agreements. The commitments are essentially the same as those assumed under the League Covenant, and supplement rather than conflict with Locarno and the Pact of Paris. Military assistance is to be extended only in the event of "unprovoked aggression" in violation of the League Covenant. The decision as to whether such a violation has occurred is left to the League Council, and only in case the Council fails to act within a reasonable time will the obligation of mutual aid become operative. A further important difference is to be found, moreover, in the fact that the treaty is open to adherence by any interested European state. A specific invitation is extended to Germany, Poland, and the Baltic states to join in a multilateral pact having precisely the same objectives. From a strictly military standpoint the safeguards which have been inserted in the agreement are doubtless open to criticism but they are of inestimable importance in promoting security. And even though the pact may never actually be enforced, its very existence is bound to have a dampening effect on Nazi aspirations.

PEACE, it increasingly appears, is a dangerous thought from which the next generation must be shielded at all costs. At Hunter College the student peace council, a conservative organization with a limited social outlook, was recently abolished by vote of the faculty, and three students who had been particularly active in the anti-war movement were suspended. When the student body named a delegation to protest against this action, three of the leaders of the group, including the president of the junior class and the editor of the college annual, were barred from their classes on the ground of their "unwillingness to comply with college regulations." At Connecticut State College the trustees have ruled that any public discussions which "reflect upon military instruction" will be cause for removal of the students or faculty members who have promoted such discussions. The result has been an almost complete intimidation of the faculty and student body. Two meetings scheduled prior to the announcement have been canceled, although neither was to have been held on the college campus or had any direct bearing on the question of military training. One was a panel discussion of world peace which was to have been held by a local church; the other was an address on Fascism in the Colleges sponsored by the Social Problems Club of the college. The faculty was even afraid to report the matter immediately to the American Association of University Professors, though the right to entertain and teach pacifist doctrines has been specifically upheld by the United States Supreme Court. Nor are these isolated cases. They are significant chiefly because they reflect an attitude of "educators" throughout the country. "Good" students do not question the wisdom or authority of their elders. If war comes, as Mr. Brisbane recently put it, being good Americans they will fight—and perhaps it is just as well that they do not know what they are fighting for.

THE ALDERMANIC COMMITTEE investigating relief in New York City has brought to public attention some appalling facts, although most of them were previously unearthed by the Mayor's independent investigating committee. About 4,000 qualified Civil Service employees seeking work in the Emergency Relief Bureau were passed over for other applicants not so well qualified. This is inexcusable; and even more so is the amount of red tape in the various bureaus. Russell Forbes, Commissioner of Purchases, testified that it cost $75 to do the "paper work" in connection with the payment of bills for one $30 order. The total orders last year came to approximately $14,500,000, while the cost of "putting them through" was more than $1,350,000. Mr. Forbes estimated that half of this expense was waste. Bureaucracy and nearsightedness in Albany and Washington are chiefly to blame for this. The federal government persists in looking upon relief as a temporary and emergency affair, and so the local administration has been forced to run its machinery on a month-to-month basis, which makes long-range planning and wise purchasing practically impossible. Then there is the complicated division of responsibility. Almost no step in New York City can be taken without permission of some sort from an official in the state-appointed TERA, which in turn is more or less dependent upon the FERA. Thus, in the end, an individual purchase means a transaction involving five separate agencies, each with power to make rules of its own. There is no reason for this mix-up to continue. Local agencies should have complete responsibility for the administration of the relief of their unemployed.

WE STILL HOLD to the old-fashioned idea that American workers, whether they be manual laborers or office employees, have a right to organize for collective bargaining. We also believe that it is in execrable taste for an employer to make fun of his striking workers. The editor and the publisher of the *American Mercury* seem to think differently. The demands of their striking office staff of seven are these: a two weeks' vacation with pay, a minimum wage of $21 a week and a restoration of the last of four successive pay cuts, and the recognition of their shop committee for collective bargaining. Surely these are not exorbitant demands, especially in view of the fact that not one of the staff has been there less than six years. The management greeted these demands with a statement which included references to the "world revolution [striking] the offices of the *American Mercury* at high noon today," to "manuscripts . . . being carefully searched for bombs," and to Moscow. As Heywood Broun has suggested, this statement deserves the 1935 bad-taste medal. In a series of subsequent contradictory statements the management claimed that five of the employees went on strike solely out of sympathy for two who had been fired for "inefficiency." As one of the two girls had been secretary to four successive editors for eleven years, her "inefficiency" must have been of a rare and remarkable sort. The owners of the *Mercury* have put in a new staff and granted them all the demands of the strikers except recognition of a shop committee. Thus the issue of collective bargaining is clear. We hope that both the editor and the publisher of the *Mercury* will soon realize that their cheap humor and reactionary labor policies are not suited to the year 1935.

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The Nation's Index of Labor Welfare

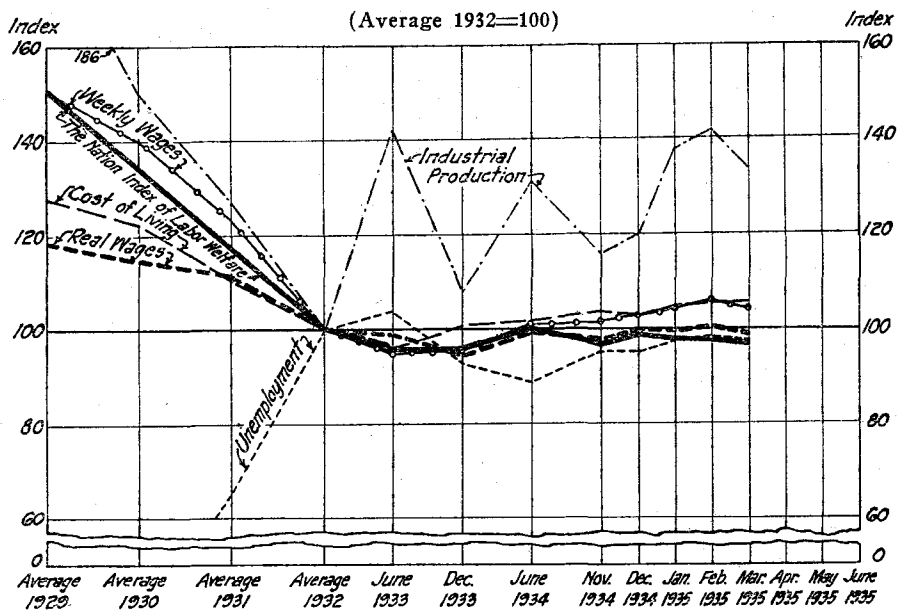
WITH this issue *The Nation* inaugurates a feature which may seem something of a departure from the traditions of this magazine. In the past, statistics, charts, and similar features of the business or trade journal have been accorded no place in a weekly devoted chiefly to politics and the arts. But times have changed. Statistics, correctly or incorrectly employed, have come to be widely used as ammunition in present-day political struggles. The New Deal, especially, has brought a constant bombardment of figures purporting to show that substantial recovery has been achieved under the all-wise guidance of the Democratic Administration.

On most items the statistics available are reasonably satisfactory. We have an abundance of detailed information regarding all types of business and financial affairs. Data on the fluctuations in business activity have been combined into indices which show at a glance the degree of our economic health. Nor has the problem of social welfare been wholly neglected. We have amassed a vast quantity of information about wages, hours, and employment in the various industries. One may find at a moment's notice, for example, how many men were employed by the building trades in El Paso in December, 1934, the average number of hours which they worked, and their average hourly wage. But despite this mass of detail, there has been no figure which could be said to reflect the status of labor as a group. To meet this lack *The Nation* has decided to prepare and publish its Index of Labor Welfare.

The technical problem of compiling such an index is imposing. While it is comparatively easy to determine wages and the cost of living, it is difficult to combine these factors with such dissimilar data as the number of unemployed and the size of relief rolls. Yet all these elements must be included if the index is to give a true picture of the relative position of the working class. No index of this type can be more than an approximation, but we believe that the method adopted in compiling *The Nation* Index assures a result that is more accurate than any comparable figure available today. It is a weighted index which takes into account weekly earnings, cost of living, unemployment, and changes in the relief rolls. Unlike the statistics quoted by the Administration, the data on wages are for manufacturing and non-manufacturing industries combined. All figures except those for unemployment are derived from government sources. The unemployment estimates are those of the American Federation of Labor, adjusted in recent months by the more up-to-date figures issued by the National Industrial Conference Board. Since approximately four persons out of five of the number listed as gainful workers in the 1930 Census are now employed, the real wages of industrial wage-earners, adjusted for the number on the payrolls, receives a four-fifths weight in determining the index. The plight of the jobless as reflected by the growth in the proportion of persons who, having exhausted their resources, have been placed on relief is given a weight of one-fifth.

THE CHART OF LABOR WELFARE

(Average 1932=100)



That there has been a considerable degree of business recovery since the low point of the depression in 1932 is evident from the sharp upturn in the Federal Reserve Index of Industrial Production. But contrary to the popular impression, average weekly wages are less than 5 per cent above the 1932 average as against a 6 per cent increase in the cost of living, leaving real wages still 1 per cent below the 1932 level. Employment is higher, but when adjustment is made for the normal increase in population, the improvement is extremely small. Compared with 1929, the picture is even more distressing. Average weekly earnings in industry have fallen approximately 30 per cent as against a decline of 17 per cent in the cost of living, which has meant a drop in real wages of about 15 per cent.

The relatively small rise in money wages since 1932 contrasts sharply with the increase in industrial profits. Figures recently compiled by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York for 659 leading business corporations show earnings for 1934 to have been 519 per cent above those for the same establishments in 1932. The effect of the New Deal on American economic life may readily be seen from the following table:

	1929	1932	1933	1934	March, 1935
Industrial Production	186	100	119	120	134
Av. Weekly Wages	151	100	95	101	105*
Cost of Living	128	100	99	103	106
Real Wages	118	100	96	98	99*
Index of Labor Welfare	100	95	98		97*
Industrial Profits	2500	100	510	619	

* Preliminary estimate.

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The Twilight of Kingship

HOWEVER sentimental the British became over the jubilee of George V they could not restore monarchy to its former role in human affairs. London has been staging a wonderful pageant, and pageants remind people of their history and only to a minor degree of the survival of the past in the present. A king lives three roles—ruler, symbol, and person. As ruler, King George's prerogatives have dwindled to nearly empty formalities. As symbol, he embodies the unity of empire, and his importance is intangible but still vast. As person, he is the leader of British aristocracy, a man who has performed his dull and wearying duties with admirable reticence and fidelity. In only one of these roles is George V of more than passing significance, as kings go. His crown is the one unifying element of the empire, a mere device if you will, but a device of such virtue that if it did not exist it would have to be invented. He is hardly a king at all, but the exigencies of modern statehood have had to make him a new sort of emperor, vested with no initiative, deprived of all power, yet a genuine factor in maintaining the loose association known as the British Commonwealth.

The British public, delighting in their king, does not distinguish between the three roles or ascribe to each its rightful weight. The decline of kinghood is being obscured. Loyal Tories have been arguing that George V is no constitutional nonentity in British politics, since he played a part, if a small one, in the formation of the National Government. He did have influence in those days, for had he pleased he might have insisted on a general election. They also relate with spirit how he helped in the appeasement following the general strike of 1926. But he has done nothing so telling as his father, who was one of the creators of the Triple Entente, and perhaps his best service to British democracy has been his acquiescence in the decline of his own power.

Americans who consider republicanism more democratic than constitutional monarchy, simply because it has no king, reveal their ignorance of the British system. The "king business" is nearly as automatic as our own electoral college, and would be still more so were it not that the British monarch combines his two other functions with kingship. Even the slapdash American assumption that the family of Windsor is an expensive luxury does not bear examination. George III when heavily in debt made a bargain with the Commons that if it would give him a handsome civil list, the nation could have the revenue of the crown lands. At the time the bargain was all in the favor of George III, but the crown lands included Regent Street, in the heart of London, and other riches which have now developed to such an extent that the nation can pay the Windsors a much larger civil list and still make a financial profit. So the dividends are even more substantial than the cost of the continual pageantry of the royal existence.

Time was when a king was a man of great power, eligible to receive remarkable personal rewards. Today he holds down one of the most boring of jobs, without prospect of advancement, without any human reward beyond that slightest of all payments, public acclaim. In the course of a year the king must attend innumerable public functions, open hospitals, dedicate public buildings, act a dignified part in ceremonies out of which his own reality has disappeared, be scrutinized by the curious, bowed to by the reverent—a condemnation to empty ritual from which there is no prospect of escape. The Prince of Wales a few years ago rebelled at the prospect and talked of ceding his succession to the Duke of York. But the Windsors, quite a human lot, though they may feel like running away from boredom have the stolid sense of duty of their German forbears. The Prince recanted. His father, without open complaint, has gone about the tedium of his job with calm and devotion. He knows he is enviable only in so far as he shows doggedness to live patiently. To this status, for all the fuss in London, has kingship fallen.

The Gallup Kidnapping

THE kidnapping and beating of Robert Minor and David Levinson in Gallup, New Mexico, are merely the latest and most sensational examples of the lawless violence that is rolling up wherever misery and industrial strife have wrecked orderly human relationships. In our pages we have listed a large number of similar recent acts of terror, some perpetrated by lawless police officers, some by private agencies under the orders of employers or business associations, some by vigilante groups, self-appointed protectors of the existing order. There was the mass violence during the "mopping up" of the San Francisco general strike; there were individual instances such as the kidnapping and beating of Samuel Herman by Nick Binns in Racine, the mistreatment of the organizers of share-croppers in Arkansas, the painless but equally unlawful ousting of James Rorty from California—to which Mr. Rorty refers in an article in this issue. The period is littered with even more numerous instances of arrests and trials which also partake of the nature of lynchings; the Herndon and Sacramento cases are typical.

The whole disorderly picture can be brought within the framework of a familiar formula: in a time like the present when fundamental claims are at issue, claims to life or property, the law is predominantly on the side of the owners of property. The qualifying adverb leaves a loophole quite large enough to admit all the honest judges and impartial juries, all the decent citizens who will stand for the rights of strikers, the unemployed, or their supporters.

So Bob Minor and David Levinson, whatever their humiliations and discomforts, must be content to be looked upon as mere symptoms of a disease which has reached the proportions of a nation-wide epidemic. The case in which they are involved is, to be sure, severe; all the elements are present which tend to decrease the resistance and insure a virulent attack. The story of its earlier stages was printed in an article by Katharine Gay of the American Civil Liberties Union in *The Nation* two weeks ago, but the whole case may be briefly reviewed here.

Taken together, Gallup and Chihuahuita, its mining-settlement suburb, are inhabited or frequented by a typical

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Southwestern population of townsfolk, ranchers, Indians, and Mexican miners and their families. Ever since the long-drawn mine strike in 1933, with its violence and months of martial law, tension has grown between the workers and the "American" population. The feeling in Chihuahuita has been intensified by prolonged unemployment, meager relief, and finally by eviction notices served on poverty-stricken miners, unable to meet payments on their shacks. The first actual eviction early in April brought immediate resistance on the part of the aggrieved population. Several persons restored the furniture of the dispossessed family to their former home. Three persons, including the tenant and the owner of the house, were arrested. When the prisoners were arraigned in Gallup, a crowd of sympathizers gathered outside the office of the justice of the peace. As the sheriff brought out the prisoners, a riot took place in the course of which the sheriff and two miners were killed. Five others were wounded. Two of the prisoners, Victor Campos and Esignio Navarro, escaped. Wholesale arrests followed, and forty-six persons were held on a charge of first-degree murder.

The men and women under arrest had no personal means of defense, but the American Civil Liberties Union and the International Labor Defense sent attorneys to Gallup, and two local lawyers assisted the defense. As the result of a preliminary hearing ten men of the forty-six arraigned have been held on charges of murder and of helping a prisoner to escape, and another man and three women on the latter charge. Their cases will be tried early in June. During the hearing the prosecution presented so flimsy a case that many observers expected that the charges would be dismissed. In a letter written after the hearing Miss Gay reports that the defendants were bound over on the uncorroborated assertions of Sheriff Roberts, the man who killed the two workers, that the slain men had shot at him and that plans had been laid in advance for freeing the prisoners. There was no evidence, however, that guns had been found on any of the workers, including the two who were killed, nor were any guns subsequently identified as having belonged to them. The state's witnesses themselves testified that no weapons of any kind were used by the so-called rioters with the exception of one light wooden stick, which was afterward picked up near the scene of the shooting.

The bitterness aroused by the indictment of the miners has its inevitable counterpart in the mood of a large part of the population of Gallup. They resent the attitude of the workers, they want them put down and kept quiet, they resent the intrusion of outside lawyers and sympathizers. Behind the Minor-Levinson kidnapping hangs the regulation backdrop for a drama of American fascism: industrial tension, racial antagonism, economic privation, the ominous presence of armed gangs looking for trouble. The attack upon the two men, one a Communist, one a Jew who may also be a Communist, both "outsiders" who came to tell Gallup how it should manage its own affairs, was as logical as fever following a chill. The whole train of evil cause and evil effect could be checked if the state and federal government determined that it should be. But this will happen only if enough citizens care enough for civil rights and human well-being to insist that they be maintained—even when men are out of work and rents can no longer be collected.

Speak the Speech

WHEN "Desire Under the Elms" was produced in Germany some years ago there was a rubber plant in the New England farm parlor and a crucifix over the Puritan bed. If memory serves us, it is also true that Verdi located a mountain range just outside of Boston in one of his less well-known operas, and of course the one thing every student knows about Bohemia is that its rocky seacoast is a terror to sailors. Such errors are merely the result of an amiable ignorance and not hard to forgive, but there seems to be something stubbornly malicious in the persistence with which the English go out of their way to write a clumsy jargon which they represent as American slang.

We do not blame them for not understanding our complicated dialect. We remember the bewilderment of one earnest student on shipboard who had just heard a companion criticized for "pulling a long line of soft moral stuff," and we sympathize with his difficulty in understanding both what was meant by "pulling a line" and just how "soft moral stuff" might be said to differ from other varieties of "moral stuff." But if they can't get the hang of it, then why, in heaven's name, should they persist in murdering the President's American?

Take the case of a sketch called "For Crying Out Loud" in the issue of *Punch* for April. It pretends to report a conversation on the subject of education—the author has the grace not to sign his name—but it illustrates about all the faults into which the Britisher can fall when he thinks he has mastered our lingo. "Well, sir, I ain't no gilded nutmeg myself, but I've got dollars in the bank" is one good example of pure if not very fortunate invention, but on the whole the phrases which no American ever heard are not so painful as those grotesquely misused. Your Englishman is firmly convinced that the slang of 1880 is still current today and that the New York gangster so mixes his particular vocabulary with the vocabulary of the farmer as to use "Well, I swan" in the same sentence with "gun Moll" and "gat." Thus our "gilded nutmeg" bets "dollars to doughnuts" and thinks that something "beats the Dutch" only a few seconds before he calls the object of his affection a "hot patootie" who refused to "middle-aisle it" with him because he is a "palooka." He also refers to a "fried [boiled?] shirt" and speaks of someone as "dead from the hoofs up" and of "a gazissey [sic] with a dial like a painted doormat."

Punch has been committing crimes of this sort for years, and inasmuch as it has not changed any of its jokes during the past half-century it will probably not change this either. Indeed, that industrious poet Berton Braley once protested against just this sort of thing to Sir Owen Seaman and got as a reply the following declaration of principles: "In caricature it is more essential to give what our clientele will recognize as a familiar likeness than to follow the very latest portrait from life." We can only reply that in that case the editors—who doubtless favor international amity—should forbid the exportation of what is intended for home consumption. Our familiar speech may not be good English but it is our very own, and we don't think what the British "recognize as a familiar likeness" any improvement.

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Issues and Men

Come Laugh at California

THE funniest comedy in the world is now being played in the great state of California, and it's all the funnier because so many who are taking part in it are in such deadly earnest. "Our readers will remember" that last summer and fall a wicked man known as Upton Sinclair convulsed California because he dared to propose that poverty was an anachronism in so rich and beautiful a state, and urged a plan which he thought, and thinks, will end it. Thereupon all the well-to-do people in California and the entire press of the state went into spasms of horror. Chief among them was an estimable weekly paper in San Francisco, the *Argonaut*. It fairly frothed at the mouth. "California," it wrote, "is not a laboratory in which the well-being of 6,000,000 human beings can be tampered with for the pleasure of giddy amateurs of government, theorists who are anxious to wreck the work of nearly a century simply because they believe their way is the only way to deal with an emergency." It admitted that a lot of people were out of work and that this condition was man-made. "Mistakes, errors, and lack of vision—not only here but throughout the world—caused the condition," it confessed, "but it will not be cured by adding catastrophe to mistake." And on another occasion it said, "California has known crises, but never one like this. . . . The enemy is within, parading in familiar and formerly honorable raiment, breathing milk-and-honey promises to beguile the gullible to destruction." Fortunately the man of the hour was at hand. Governor Merriam, governor by accident, who was in office as a result of the death of his predecessor, was the very man California needed to stave off chaos, ruin, and bolshevism. "The catastrophe of Sinclair's election," the *Argonaut* opined, "would be drastic enough to overthrow all that is fine and good and stable in California life. In Merriam the people of California have a promise and a symbol of strength, progress, and stability of traditional growth—in Sinclair a promise and a symbol of ruin."

Well, the forces of righteousness triumphed, the symbol of strength, progress, and stability took office—and lo and behold, it is not righteousness but wickedness that rules in Sacramento now. Listen to the *Argonaut* today: "Would Upton Sinclair have done worse in the gubernatorial chair than the man who defeated him? It may well be doubted. He might even have done better, for he has an atom or two of genius in his composition while all one can discern in Merriam is *cobwebs from an empty skull"!* It appears that this ex-hero is playing politics, and rotten politics; he is imitating Nero in his use of the violin. The prosperity, yes, "even the safety of California is trembling in the balance today." Incredible as it seems, he has put the Townsend old-age plan before everything else, and if the *Argonaut* is to be trusted, he has listened to those who talk of him as a future Presidential candidate. But that is not the worst. Governor Merriam is proposing a state income-tax law. Citing Charles G. Norris and his wife as an example, the *Argonaut* declares that these distinguished authors are paying about 52 per cent of their income now to the federal government, and that if Governor Merriam's income tax becomes law they will pay an additional 18 per cent, or 70 cents out of every dollar; and that, as the *Argonaut* remarks, "would be coming pretty close to communism." The people of California voted, it appears, for Merriam in order to avoid confiscation, which is merely another name for communism, and now, you see, they have jumped from the frying pan into the fire.

The trouble is that at bottom the Governor is "a moral bolshevik" because he was a prohibitionist, a fact that the press of California failed to bring out last fall, and a fellow who is a moral bolshevik is so close to being the real thing that it is only a step to the full-fledged article. The *Argonaut* shrieks in its anguish: "Heaven help us before we perish from the folly of having chosen such a man as governor." Where, it asks, oh, where is the Governor Merriam who during the campaign was going to move heaven and earth to "pull California from the abyss of deficits and confiscatory taxation"? What the San Francisco *Chronicle* cannot stomach is that Governor Merriam is a natural ally of Huey Long. It noted that the legislature considered asking Huey Long to address it, and it suggested that Governor Merriam "preside at the meeting and present his fellow-exponent of the doctrine that twice two is fifty-seven. Birds of this particular feather in common should flock together for once, no matter how much the remainder of their plumage may differ." Plainly, if Governor Merriam keeps up these wicked tactics, California may yet beg Upton Sinclair to run for governor again.

And what are we to say of the fact that the Assembly has unanimously passed a bill for a production-for-use program! Yes, just think of it—the very thing for advocating which Upton Sinclair was denounced as a Communist, a destroyer, public enemy No. 1. It is a self-help cooperative measure sponsored by the Sinclair Democrats to foster and develop cooperative organizations for the unemployed. Those bulwarks of safety and sanity, the possessing classes and the embattled editors of California, must indeed be overcome with horror. Here is treason in their own ranks. Nothing but the facts that the legislature is considering a lot of anti-red bills—one of which has elicited a protest from eighteen professors at the University of California because it makes it a felony to possess or transport revolutionary literature—that a twenty-year-old girl student has been sentenced to twenty-five days in prison for distributing handbills demanding peace, and that after nineteen years Tom Mooney is still in jail can preserve one's faith in the glorious state of California. But I tremble for the future. Shall we see a soviet elected in California before June 15?

Oswald Garrison Villard

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Dodging Taxes with Mellon

By THOMAS O. SHEPARD

IT is clear that Andrew W. Mellon does not understand the significance of the economic order under which he lives. How else explain his reluctance to pay taxes when taxation is the method by which capitalism pays its running expenses? For who should be more willing than Andrew W. Mellon to keep the capitalist state solvent? Yet in the year 1931, when he was seventy-six years old, he decided to whittle down his responsibilities to the government which had protected his enormous fortune. No sane government would have allowed such a fortune to remain in the hands of any one man; not only because its possession meant control of thousands of human lives, but because Mr. Mellon had acquired it by inheritance. Mr. Mellon was not appreciative of this paternal government. Instead, he employed five out of a theoretical maximum of nine devices in order to escape contributing his share of its running expenses.

When a man is seventy-six and wealthy, it is natural that he should think of two things: how to pass on his wealth to his family, and how to atone for past sins, committed or imaginary. Mr. Mellon, after much cogitation, apparently thought that the only sin would be to fail to preserve the full quantity of his wealth. He had a son and a daughter. If he took no precautions, the fortune they would inherit from him would be greatly diminished by taxation. In these circumstances a man must be careful. Mr. Mellon was. He formed a holding company, named it the Coalesced, and as the government counsel has pointed out, gave it all its assets and chose its personnel:

> Its directors consisted of two of his old and trusted employees, his two children, and his tax attorney. . . . The books were kept in his office, kept by the bookkeeper who keeps all his books. He owns all of the preferred stock, which absorbs all of its income, and he has divided the common stock equally between his children, who get no income from it. Every dollar paid out from its earnings has been paid to Mr. Mellon.

Thus Mr. Mellon created the almost perfect instrument to enable him to enjoy the income on some of his wealth while he lived, and to allow his children, Paul and Ailsa, when he died, to appropriate to themselves this wealth and its income without subtraction of costly estate taxes.

However, Mr. Mellon had a problem. He wanted to move about $68,000,000 in the form of securities to Coalesced. Some of these securities were worth more than he had paid for them. Therefore, if he sold them to Coalesced he would have to pay a tax on the profits. To avoid this ghastly consequence, he gave the securities to Coalesced in a non-taxable exchange for its stock. But there were 123,000 shares of Pittsburgh Coal Company common stock on which he could claim a $5,700,000 loss on the basis of prevailing market prices, a hypothetical loss which could be utilized in reducing his income-tax return for 1931. If he exchanged these shares directly for Coalesced stock he would not be able to utilize the loss. How to utilize it and still not lose control of the shares was the problem.

In his dilemma Mr. Mellon went into conference with the president of the Union Trust Company of Pittsburgh. Mr. Mellon was a founder of this bank, he had been its first president, and he and his corporations had always been among its largest customers. His brother was a vice-president. In addition, the Mellons owned large blocks of the bank's stock. All these facts may be immaterial. Nevertheless, Henry C. McEldowney, president of the bank, agreed to "buy" for the bank's account the 123,000 shares at a price of $500,000. This was done on December 30, 1931—the next to the last day on which transactions affecting a 1931 income-tax return could be made. Not a word was said about the "sale" in public, although the shares represented a dominant interest in the largest coal company in the world.

The Pittsburgh Coal Company underwent no change of policy or management. Three months later Paul Mellon was elected to the board of directors. The usual theory of directorates is that the more stock one owns, the more representation one is entitled to. However, the name of Mellon carried such magic that this foolish practice was abandoned and the Pittsburgh Coal Company, to show its iconoclasm, said in effect to Mr. Mellon, "The less right you have to be represented the more representation you get." Mr. Mellon's brother, Richard, owned 70,000 shares of Pittsburgh Coal common stock. Together the two blocks represented 51 per cent of the common stock, but Andrew apparently had no compunction in breaking up this control and lessening the bargaining value of his brother's shares by "selling" his own. After all, he wasn't his brother's keeper.

The Union Trust Company "paid" Mr. Mellon $500,000 for his stock. But an old loan extended to Mr. Mellon by the bank was immediately reduced by exactly the same amount. It was probably just a coincidence that Mr. Mellon decided to pay off $500,000 of his bank loan at the same time the bank "bought" his stock for $500,000. In any event, 118 days elapsed, and then the Union Trust Company "sold" the same stock to the Coalesced Corporation. According to Frank Hogan, Mr. Mellon's counsel, it happened something like this:

> . . . the Union Trust Company asked Mr. H. M. Johnson [Mellon's personal financial secretary, who among other things was a director of the Pittsburgh Coal Company] whether any of the [Mellon] interests he was connected with would be interested in buying this coal company. He did not quote and was not asked to quote a price, because Mr. Johnson told him so far as he knew none of the interests he had any knowledge of was interested in its acquisition. Two or three times thereafter officers of the Union Trust Company again approached Mr. Johnson to ascertain whether or not the stock which they had bought in December would be purchased by some interests with which he was connected, using that general term. . . .[Mr. Mellon] was in Europe. Mr. Johnson took the matter up with his fellow-directors on the board [of Coalesced, including Paul Mellon]. . . . Calling for a price, they were quoted [by the bank] $517,000 plus.

And in this charmingly casual manner the "sale" was

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consummated. The price of $517,000 is interesting for three reasons: first, because Coalesced had no hesitancy about paying for the stock a price higher than the Union Trust Company had paid, even though the market had gone down since the original "sale" by Mr. Mellon to the bank; second, because it is made up of that ever-recurring figure of $500,000 plus $17,000, the latter sum just happening to work out as the total cost of the transaction to the Union Trust Company in taxes and in interest at 6 per cent on $500,000 for 118 days; and finally because, in the words of Robert H. Jackson, counsel for the Commissioner of Internal Revenue:

> . . . the price [per share] is one that never was heard of before in any business transaction, one that shows on its face that it was not a negotiated price between any two business men. I cannot read it . . . I would not vouch for my being correct, but it is $4.18435399, a price that never was quoted on any stock between two business men in the whole world. A price that shows on its face that instead of being a negotiated transaction it was a synthetic price built up to reimburse the Union Trust Company.

The government, it may thus be seen, has developed a cynicism about the validity and reality of the sale of the Pittsburgh Coal stock, charging it was a "shadow sale" and a fraud, not entitling Mr. Mellon to the claimed tax reduction.

Mr. Jackson says further that the Union Trust Company, around which the transaction pivoted, was not a disinterested factor. He charges that Andrew W. Mellon was the largest single stockholder of the Union Trust Company at the time of the "sale" and in a position to dominate its every action, though at that time Mr. Mellon was Secretary of the Treasury of the United States and as such not allowed by law to own stock in any bank. If the charge is substantiated, it means in effect that Mellon deposited 123,000 shares of stock with his right hand in a safe-deposit box—whose key was in his pocket—and that he withdrew the same shares with his left hand and claimed that he had lost $5,700,000 in the process.

The question then is whether he made a bona fide sale of his bank stock in 1921 when he became Harding's Secretary of the Treasury. The following are the facts: In 1921 he "sold" his 3,300 shares of Union Trust Company stock to his brother for $10,500,000. The "purchase" contract called for the payment of interest on the "purchase" price at the rate of 5⅓ per cent annually, approximately the same rate at which dividends were then being paid on the stock. Although Richard Mellon was a millionaire, he never paid a cent of the "purchase" price, nor was any demand ever made by Andrew in the ensuing nine years for payment. Preliminary figures of the government show that Richard Mellon collected between 1921 and 1930 about $6,068,000 in dividends on the stock and paid his brother about $6,063,000 in "interest" on the purchase price.

The curious approximation of these sums was of interest to the government. As Mr. Jackson told the Board of Tax Appeals:

> You see the dividends advanced on these stocks, the dividends increased, and the payments of alleged interest increased to keep pace with the dividends, so that, as Mr. Hogan has said, eventually on a 5⅓ per cent contract Mr. R. B. Mellon was paying to his brother some 7 or 8 per cent. Of course he was getting 7 or 8 per cent from the stocks, and now we have this explanation, that Mr. A. W. Mellon raised the interest rate from time to time. It is the dividend rate that was raised.

Twice the dividends on the bank stock were increased. And twice Andrew raised the interest rate on the $10,500,000 which Brother Richard owed him. He did this in a period when money was scarce and thus, as Mr. Jackson pointed out, practiced usury on his brother. Brother Richard never protested. He had taken on a $10,500,000 liability and yet he never received a nickel profit on the whole deal. Brother Andrew, on the other hand, received after 1921 more than $6,000,000 in "interest" from Brother Richard, and yet Mr. Hogan flatly declared that from the day of the "sale" on, "A. W. Mellon never owned or had the slightest monetary or personal interest in one share of that stock."

Brother Richard was apparently something of a philanthropist, too, as the following will bear out. Between 1921 and 1930 the Union Trust Company plowed millions of dollars into its surplus as its earnings increased. The market price of the stock advanced from $2,750 a share in 1921 to about $10,500 in 1930. But in the latter year Richard Mellon "sold" to his nephew Paul, Andrew's son, the same stock at exactly the 1921 price. Historians need not search for the motive which prompted the generous uncle to waive a neat net profit of about $25,000,000. Mr. Hogan said that he was "actuated by a motive so commendable that it must even yet be recorded in high heaven in R. B. Mellon's favor," which motive was "that he was not going to profit out of a transaction with his brother at the expense of his brother's children."

The cynical Mr. Jackson, however, was not moved by this touching recital. He said:

> Since 1921 every benefit that there was in those stocks came to this taxpayer [Andrew W. Mellon] and at the end of that time [1930] they moved to his son, and then they moved into a subsidiary, the Coalesced Corporation, and today every dollar of dividends that the Union Trust Company is paying on 2,000 shares of this stock is moved through the Coalesced Corporation into Mr. Mellon's own possession by way of the dividends of Coalesced.

Besides the 2,000 shares mentioned by Mr. Jackson there are the other 1,300 shares of the original 3,300-share block. In 1932 Paul Mellon executed notes to his father for $2,000,000 in "payment" of the other 1,300 shares (Paul having assumed Richard's obligation to Andrew). These notes carry no interest and do not mature until 1947, when Andrew will be ninety-two years old, if he lives. But the notes are so arranged for payment that Paul will merely be turning over to his father dividends from the 1,300 shares in the form of instalments on the "purchase" price. In this way Mr. Mellon will obtain $180,000 a year from the dividends but he will not pay an income tax on it, since the money represents the sale price of his stock in form. Furthermore, the stock will not be taxable as an inheritance.

In addition to the Pittsburgh Coal "sale," the government claims that two other transactions were fraudulent and made only to establish a tax loss. One involved the "sale" of 54,000 shares of Western Public Service stock jointly owned by Andrew and Richard Mellon. On December 2, 1931, the stock was "sold" to the Union Trust

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Company at a claimed loss to the brothers of $804,000. Thirty-four days later the bank "sold" the stock back to the brothers for exactly the same price at which it had "purchased" it, plus a commission of 7½ cents a share. "There was no purpose on earth for that transaction except to register a tax loss," says Mr. Jackson.

In the third fraud charge the government contends that Mr. Mellon sold securities to Ascalot Company, a holding company which his daughter, Ailsa, wholly owns, merely for the purpose of establishing a loss. Mr. Jackson said that if the Ascalot transaction stood alone, he should not feel justified in charging fraud. However, he added:

> A single transaction, while it may strain the board's [of tax appeals] belief a little to believe that it is in good faith, has the benefit of the doubt. . . . This board has held that where those transactions occur again and again, it overtaxes credulity, and that repetition is the best proof of a common plan.

Mr. Hogan stated, on the other hand, that these transactions were bona fide sales, "and when I say sales, I mean sales." Unfortunately, reiteration is not a substitute for proof.

In addition to the fraud charges, there is the McClintic-Marshall reorganization issue. This is a technical issue, involving corporation procedure and the basis on which taxes should be computed.

The total sum at stake in the Mellon tax case is $3,000,000, one-half of which represents the penalty for fraud. Mr. Mellon has appealed this assessment of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue to the Board of Tax Appeals. Not to appeal would have constituted an admission of the fraud. At the same time that he appealed, Mr. Mellon asserted that he was entitled to additional tax deductions not previously listed. These deductions are for charitable, educational, and artistic contributions, but they will enter into the dispute only if the Board of Tax Appeals finds against Mr. Mellon in the present case. The case will go on for many months but Mr. Hogan apparently has brought up these "charities" at this early date in order to offset the deepening public impression that Mr. Mellon is far from being the servant of the people he thinks he is.

Behind the Kirov Executions—II

By LOUIS FISCHER

THE first reaction of everybody I talked to in Moscow in the days immediately after Kirov's assassination on December 1, 1934, was, "How unfortunate!" "How untimely!" "Things have been going so well." Not since August, 1918, had an attempt been made on the life of a Soviet leader. Strange that it should have occurred just at the moment when the regime was beginning to lift itself out of the serious difficulties encountered during the first Five-Year Plan. And the assassin, Leonid Nikolaiev, was a young man of thirty, a product of the revolution and a Communist.

Nikolaiev apparently had planned the deed for some time. A diary he left supports this view, and moreover he had been apprehended once at the Leningrad railway station when Kirov was about to take a train for Moscow. He had had a revolver in his pocket at the time, but he explained that he possessed a special permission to carry arms and was released. On the day of the assassination Nikolaiev lingered in the long corridors of the Smolny Institute, and when Kirov arrived in the building, Nikolaiev followed him into his waiting room and shot him through the neck at a distance of half a yard. Nikolaiev immediately turned his revolver and tried to kill himself, but Kirov's secretaries stopped him.

The first official act after Nikolaiev's seizure was the arrest and incarceration of the heads of the G.P.U. of Leningrad. Medved, the chief of the G.P.U. in that city, was an important figure not alone by reason of the position he occupied. He was an old Bolshevik, one of the organizers of the Cheka, and had earned three decorations of merit. Medved and his nine immediate subordinates were nevertheless clapped into jail. This summary treatment (they were subsequently sentenced to prison) served to notify the general population of the country that no wave of terror would follow the assassination.

The authorities, nevertheless, felt that drastic measures were necessary, for assassinations, like suicides, are likely to be contagious. In the fortnight following Kirov's death, accordingly, 103 persons were executed. All of them had been in prison before the assassination. The official communiqué on their quick secret trials and death sentences stated that the majority of them were foreign spies who had entered the Soviet Union illegally from Poland, Finland, and Latvia with the intention of assassinating Soviet leaders. Although this was true, there were among the 103 some Soviet citizens, including a small group of Komsomols who in 1932 had plotted the death of Stalin. Yet the fact that all official utterances insisted that the 103 were chiefly outsiders constituted further evidence of the government's intention to refrain from punitive measures against the population. The population, these utterances implied, was not involved.

The shooting of the 103 was a frank effort to intimidate terrorists. Nowhere in the world is it possible to protect public figures from the bullets of madmen or political extremists. But some hired assassins may be deterred by a realization that ruthless extirpation awaits them upon their illegal arrival in the Soviet Union. The Kremlin apparently felt that the diminution of arrests by the G.P.U. had given foreign intelligence services and White Russian organizations abroad the impression that they could now work with greater safety in the U. S. S. R. The shooting of the 103 was a warning that Soviet vigilance had not been relaxed. To convey this message the Bolsheviks sacrificed foreign terrorists who had already been convicted of terrorist acts. If no repressive measures had followed the Kirov murder, anti-Bolshevik circles would undoubtedly have felt encouraged to intensify their activities.

Now it is possible to hold that no government has the right to take human life. But if the Cheka had not annihilated the enemies of the revolution, the Bolsheviks would

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not be in power today, and instead of the economic, social, and cultural achievements of the Soviet Union there would be just another capitalist country in crisis. One's attitude toward the Cheka and G.P.U., accordingly, depends a good deal on one's attitude toward Soviet achievements. Every state is an organ of violence and suppression. Indeed, social peace is normally maintained by the threat of both. Only the extreme anarchists have a consistent approach to government violence. Any person, however, who is not in active revolt against the essential violence of capitalism (and I do not mean only the suppression of civil liberties; I mean the wage system, the social injustice, the recurrent destruction of life, health, and material values during depressions and wars)—any such person has no ethical basis for a protest against Soviet violence if he considers all the hostility to which the Bolsheviks have been exposed since they took power. Shooting, of course, is the ultimate form of violence, but other forms surround us on every side.

The execution of the 103 was intended for its effect on certain groups abroad and at home. Yet the Bolsheviks should also have taken into account the probable effect on world public opinion. That public opinion may be misinformed and saturated with hypocrisy, but it exists and it is a factor, and some of its sections have tried to take a friendly stand on Russia. Besides, many persons who admitted the justice of executions if they were really necessary had come to believe that they were no longer necessary. The executions, too, created the utterly erroneous impression abroad that the Soviets were panicky and hysterical, and that Moscow had something to fear. The defenders of the executions have naturally endeavored to make out a case for an internal and external menace which compelled Moscow to act harshly. There is no such menace. Soviet political stability is greater than ever. Not for one fraction of a second was there any trace during the Kirov episode of the "sedition" which jaundiced commentators like the writer of Topics of the Times in the New York *Times* "discovered."

The executions are one phase of the Kirov affair. For sixteen days after the assassination the Bolshevik press raged against the foreign counter-revolutionaries. Then suddenly, on December 17, the Bolsheviks turned their fire on Zinoviev, Kamenev, and other ex-oppositionist Communists. But surely it could not have been both!

This has puzzled many people. They have been unable to find the link between the whites and the Zinovievists. The reason is very simple: there is no link. The former oppositionist leaders were called counter-revolutionaries, but no Soviet source ever attributed to them any connections with foreign whites. Nor was such a charge leveled against Trotzky. Nevertheless, whites had urged the assassination of Kirov, and the assassin had had dealings with the Latvian consul in Leningrad. In London recently I read an issue of *Za Rossiyu* (*For the Sake of Russia*), an émigré journal published in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. It was the issue of November, before the Kirov murder, and on the second page it contained a call for the assassination of Kirov and Kaganovich. It would be better, the article stated, to kill Stalin, but he was carefully guarded.

Now when the Kirov episode reached its height, and on the basis of Nikolaiev's depositions, the Soviet government officially stated that the Latvian consul in Leningrad had been in communication with the murderer. The consul was thereupon recalled. This in itself would not establish that official's guilt, for he had become *persona non grata* in any case. Nor do I regard the Soviet charge as sufficient proof in itself. But a number of bourgeois foreigners in Moscow who were close to the situation were convinced that Nikolaiev had gone to the consul on several occasions and received sums of money from him. Here, then, is a basis for the hypothesis that Nikolaiev was in touch with, or informed about the intentions of, outside whites who wished to remove Kirov.

This same Nikolaiev was an ex-oppositionist in the Communist Party. In a periodic purge in January, 1934, he had been expelled. In March, 1934, however, upon delivering the regulation recantation, he was readmitted but demoted to a minor position, and it was this personal misfortune, the responsibility for which he presumably placed at Kirov's door, which must have led to the crime.

Like some other Leningrad Communists, Nikolaiev had followed Zinoviev and Kamenev into the opposition camp in 1926-27. The question is how loyal he had remained to their ideas in recent years. Although Zinoviev and Kamenev and other prominent ex-oppositionists were sentenced to extended exile after the Kirov assassination, I do not believe they had anything to do with the assassination. The ex-oppositionists in the U. S. S. R., and particularly Zinoviev and Kamenev, had no popular following and no great personal influence. In their heart of hearts they remained critics of Stalin. But the most they were capable of was a scarcely effective "whispering campaign" against Stalin's leadership. It was the contention of the Soviet government that echoes of this whispering campaign had reached Nikolaiev and his accomplices and inspired the murder of Kirov.

What happened, I think, was this: Nikolaiev had once been expelled from the Communist Party for oppositionist ideas. There was a rumor while I was still in Moscow in December, 1934, that after Kirov's assassination Stalin personally cross-examined Nikolaiev for several hours. Although rumors flew thick and fast in those days in Moscow, and many have had to be discarded, I credit this one. It must have been important to Stalin to know just what could induce a Soviet citizen and Communist to kill one of the most beloved and able of Bolshevik statesmen. In that tête-à-tête conversation Stalin may have detected oppositionist notions in the mind of Nikolaiev. In any case, subsequent events strongly indicate that Stalin came to the conclusion, "Once an oppositionist, always an oppositionist," and although his power is supreme and unquestioned, Stalin decided to proceed immediately with the complete annihilation of the small remnant of unhappy Trotzkyists and Zinovievists who, through recantation, had crept back into minor posts in the party and in the government.

These unfortunate internal refugees are a mere handful, at most a few thousand. They have no political significance. Then why all these Draconian measures against them? The Bolsheviks believe in the efficacy of small forces. They insist on wiping out every trace of opposition to their regime. The greater the speed of an automobile, the more damage an imperfection in the road can do. The more a government tries to do, the less it wants to be interfered with by enemies. The cruelty meted out to enemies of the Soviets is no criterion of the strength of those enemies. It is rather a measure of the earnestness with which the Bol-

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sheviks proceed toward their goal. If, for a time, the Communist Party desires to shower special favors on the peasantry, which bore so much of the brunt of the first Five-Year Plan, and suspects that "leftist" Trotzkyist and Zinovievist individuals might react against such a policy, it would be the time-honored Bolshevik strategy to remove these individuals before they could do anything wrong. More prevention. If Stalin sensed a popular yearning for fewer gyrations of policy and believed that certain small elements were tugging in the direction of more gyrations, he would be likely to nip those efforts in the bud. This explains the exiling of the ex-opposition leaders and their alleged followers.

Now Mr. X and Mrs. Y are entitled to their own temperamental reaction to the events that followed the Kirov assassination, and their philosophical attitude toward the Soviet social system will in some measure determine that reaction. But the professional observer is called upon to assess those events dispassionately and to decide whether they represent a new policy. Thus, from the political point of view, the most important question is whether the repressions after Kirov's murder will check or slacken the tendency toward tolerance and relaxation which had made itself so marked before December 1. Here the answer is unequivocally in the negative. Indeed, during the weeks that have elapsed since the execution that welcome tendency has continued with a consistency and clarity which prove that the Kirov assassination provoked no panic and no doubts. So far in 1935 two far-reaching reforms have been inaugurated. In the first place, a large number of kulaks or recalcitrant peasants who had been exiled and put to work as semi-convicts in the building of canals and railroads have been allowed to return to their former habitations and to enter collective farms hitherto closed to them. The second innovation is of even greater significance: heretofore, Soviet elections were indirect and conducted by show of hands, and the vote of a peasant carried only one-fifth the weight of that of a workingman. In February, at the All-Union Soviet Congress, this was changed. Instead of a system in which citizens elect their local soviets, these soviets in turn elect district soviets, district soviets in turn elect regional soviets, these regional soviets in turn elect republican soviets, these republican soviets in turn elect the national congress —thus assuring predominance of Communist and pro-Soviet delegates—the new system provides for direct election, by individual voters, of members of the national parliament and of all smaller soviets as well. The secret ballot, moreover, has taken the place of open polling, and the vote of a peasant has been equalized with that of a workingman. Prime Minister Molotov, who introduced these bills, stressed the fact that they brought more democracy to the U. S. S. R. at a time when the rest of the world was moving swiftly toward fascism.

What does this new chapter in Soviet political history disclose? When the first constitution of Soviet Russia was drafted, the Bolsheviks limited franchise and discriminated against the peasants because they did not trust the sentiments of large sections of the population. Today, economic successes have won over huge blocks of skeptics, while agrarian collectivization and the consequent infiltration of Soviet culture and influence into all rural centers have revolutionized the sentiments of the farming millions. The state has nothing to fear and the lid can be lifted. New forms of proletarian dictatorship are evolving. Political democracy is supplemented by a new economic democracy. The peasants have been told that hereafter they can run their collectives without the interference of outside bureaucrats. In the Soviet village, therefore, we are witnessing an important change toward real socialism.

Looking Toward the Election

By RAYMOND GRAM SWING

Washington, May 6

THE President, according to Mr. Farley, will make the running in 1936 as a liberal. This is being interpreted in the capital as forecasting another swing to the left. The hostility of big business, expressed by the National Manufacturers' Association and the right wing of the Chamber of Commerce, suits Mr. Farley's purposes admirably. The President is made to appear liberal without reproach. He can campaign as the rememberer of the forgotten man because big business snubs him. But the situation is specious. Big business did not turn on the President because it does not appreciate his many services, but because it has one last battle to win. It wants to defeat a few measures before Congress: the utilities bill, the banking bill, and above all the Wagner labor-disputes bill. In its judgment the President is on the run, and more is to be gained by hostility than gratitude. The strategy loses nothing, since the battles won during the winter will not have to be won again. Nobody will now insist on work relief paying standard wages; nobody can rewrite the security legislation so that it changes the social fabric of American life; above all, nobody can restore the fighting spirit of the New Deal. The "liberalism" of the President is confined to five "must" measures: the security legislation, the extension of the NRA, the banking bill, the utilities bill, and railroad legislation. Of these the sting of reform is to be found only in the utilities bill, and intimations of social change only in the banking bill. These are the remnants of Roosevelt's liberalism, and they are not first-rate campaign issues. They are not so useful as the denunciations of the manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce. So Mr. Farley is pleased, and Mr. Roosevelt himself is pleased. That they are pleased is of course significant; big business has made them a present, and they are going to use it. What big business has not done is to make them angry, or determined, or inspired to break its control over the national destiny. The President countered the Chamber of Commerce attack by asserting, accurately, I think, that the majority of business men are not hostile to the Administration. But the President's reply does not change the truth that he has yielded to big business without appeasing it, and its appetite for complete victory is sharper than ever. All he gets out of the double attack of the manu-

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facturers and the Chamber of Commerce is to be called a liberal by Jim Farley.

The Farley strategy from now on is to head off a third-party movement. It is too early to say how well he will succeed. If there is no third party—or if there are too many third parties—it will not be the President's or Mr. Farley's doings at all. The third-party elements are too diversified to fall naturally into a coherent whole. Coughlin's people are currency fanatics in the main; Long's potentialities as a popular leader are still to be tested outside a few Southern districts; the Farmer-Labor radicals are conferring and studying, with both fire and intelligence, but they cannot know whether they are going to meet any popular response. Long and Coughlin might work together in time, but not yet. And the Farmer-Labor radicals, so far at least, feel sure they will have nothing to do with either of them. From Farley's standpoint, the safest solution for the President would be to have the Farmer-Labor radicals come out with a socialist platform, as outspoken as possible on the abolition of profits, and to have them pull considerable weight in the country. Here the Farmer-Labor radicals are being helpful, for they appear to be ready to adopt such a platform. It is a good one, too, and it will have profound educational value. It will preach the doctrines of abundance and real security. But they must be realistic enough to see that they cannot hold the balance of power as soon as 1936. However much they speak of "production for use," that is socialism, and the label will be a liability. But the stronger they are, so long as they are not too strong, the harder they make it for Long and Coughlin, the real men for Farley to fear. They will show that Long and Coughlin are not genuine radicals. They will drive a good many discontented middle-class people back to Roosevelt. Without them in the field, the millions behind Long and Coughlin might more easily coalesce into a party of discontent which would split the Democratic vote and give the Republicans a walk-away in 1936.

The assumption of most political observers is that the Republicans are certain to nominate a conservative next year. They will have to move to the right of Roosevelt, narrow though the President has made that space for them. For their choice is to do this, or to compete with the President for the middle of the road, or to espouse all the things the New Deal once stood for and failed to achieve. Young Republicans, and wise old Republicans from the Middle West, may know that the best policy would be to drive the President to the right, and to make the Republicans the party of the future. But if the leopard cannot change his spots, the Republican elephant cannot be expected to change his anatomy. So the Republicans can either fight as reactionaries—disguised as individualists—or become middle-of-the-roaders. And as they cannot expect the country to change one zigzagger for another zigzagger, they have nothing left but to run a reactionary. So the set-up next year, as it now looks, is propitious for the President. The Republicans, backing up the verdict of the manufacturers and the Chamber of Commerce, will supply him with a halo of liberalism which he has done little to merit. And on the left, even if the opening for a third party is gapingly wide, it probably will not be filled by any solid, organically united group.

It may be true that the President will now publicly wash away a good deal of the stain left on his hands after his traffic with big business during the winter. He may court organized labor, which always is hanging around praying for his friendly nod. The A. F. of L. has valiantly come forward to help him continue the NRA for two years, after his own party leaders in the Senate were ready to extend it only till next April. In return, he may be moved to help force the Wagner labor-disputes bill through Congress in a useful form. Certainly he has this opportunity. But to expect this is to assume that the President is a great liberal, and not just a liberal to Jim Farley. It would be more consistent with experience to expect him to appear to be fighting for labor and then to accept something which, like Public Resolution 44, turns out to be a well-planned victory for the employers. Both he and Miss Perkins have the idea that the way for labor to win battles with big business is to lose them, accept what it is offered, and "bore from within" in confident faith in an evolutionary millennium. The measure of the President's liberalism is taken in his five-point program. The Wagner bill is not among them, as it would have been had he been planning a real swing to the left. However much he makes left flourishes, they will not be signs of profound change. Senator La Follette, one knows, does not count on White House support in the fight he is planning for social taxation. And there is no mercy in wait which will make unemployment insurance and old-age pensions into instruments for redistributing wealth.

The President is not counting alone on what Farley calls his liberalism to reelect him. Judging from some of his recent private conversations, he trusts principally in recovery, and here he is encouraged by a growing body of economic thought. It is worth recording that men of national standing and careful judgment are predicting that the log-jam will be broken, with consequences which vary in the prophecies from a mild boom by the autumn of 1936 to a "blowing off of the roof." These prophecies are another way of saying that durable goods, as distinguished from consumers' goods, are coming into demand. Now Roosevelt has banked on this recovery, and if it comes he is entitled to the benefit of it. For his surrenders to business after the election are not the result of stupidity but of carefully deliberated choice. He saw that recovery might not be coming, and was frightened by genuine forebodings. Without recovery there would be no end to federal relief, no escape on that account from ultimate inflation. He made his peace with business in good conscience, no doubt. The one alternative to surrender he did have was to put the government into business on a gigantic scale, and to build a mixed economy of state socialism and private enterprise. Why, when he weighed this alternative, he plumped for a return to big-business supremacy, his biographers will tell in later years. Big, historic, epoch-beginning decisions have not been in the President's line. He had his first great chance when the banks closed and he might have taken them over. His opportunity came again last November. Both times he shied away from going beyond "his mandate," and now, having had to scrap the substance of the New Deal, he is fighting chiefly for its shadow, satisfied with the shadow so long as he gets the fruit of his bargain with destiny, reelection. He did not surrender simply to win a second term, for he is no time-server. He surrendered because he found he could not reform capitalism and make it work at the same time, and he was not the man to take on the task of reconstructing it.

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Black Chauvinism

By BENJAMIN STOLBERG

FOR the American Negro the Civil War was the first American Revolution. The Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth amendments redecorated the Constitution with a black bill of rights, which enfranchised the black man as a bourgeois citizen. Now the slave was free to enjoy the privileges of political democracy in an expanding economy of laissez faire. He could run for the Presidency or he could force the House of Morgan into bankruptcy.

All this the Civil War did for the Negro in theory, which indeed was an enormous step in the history of freedom. But none of it did it accomplish in fact. For one thing, the war was not fought *by* the Negro, and no revolution can be won vicariously. For another thing, the war was not fought *for* the Negro. It was fought to establish the hegemony of Northern industrial capital over the feudal agrarian South. And to achieve this hegemony it was necessary to change the slave market into a wage market. The kennel economy of chattel slavery had to be transformed and absorbed by the jungle economy of "free" labor. The bill of rights was the slave's permit to sell his labor in the open market. In short the Negro became a *bourgeois* citizen at the very historic moment when he was most valuable as a *proletarian* helot. Hence the Northern industrialist was not really interested in expanding this permit beyond the Negro's privilege to be exploited as a worker. And when Reconstruction got under way, the Northern industrialists and the Southern planters came to terms about him. The South was permitted to start the counter-revolution of the white terror, which did not allow the black worker to hoist himself by his newly won civil liberties above the social status of the slave. The Negro's American Revolution came ninety years too late. Had he received his bourgeois rights at the same time as the white worker, the color line would have bleached into the class line long ago.

This historical dislocation in his class structure caused a deep split in the psychology of the American Negro. It turned him into a sociological caricature, exaggerating a hundred-fold the contradiction between the middle-class ambitions and the proletarian destiny of white labor. And in the years since the Civil War black leadership has never really grasped the significance of this gap.

This leadership, since Reconstruction, has always been divided into two schools which in the last analysis are one, as has been brilliantly shown by Dr. Abram L. Harris. The outstanding figure in one school was the late Booker T. Washington, who founded Tuskegee, and in the other it is W. E. B. DuBois, who helped to found the National Association for the advancement of Colored People.

Booker T. Washington carried over from slavery the Uncle Tom psychology of getting off the sidewalk of social equality and pleading merely for the right of economic opportunity. His theory was that the Negro should wholeheartedly enter our competitive economy by perfecting his skill as an industrial or agrarian worker. At Tuskegee he trained excellent craftsmen and skilled farmers to graduate into an industrial technology which was obliterating skill or to become mere tenant serfs. This country swarms with skilled graduates of black industrial schools who are red-caps, share-croppers, and the worst-paid common laborers. For this strategy of racial segregation Northern white philanthropy gave Washington and his kind millions of dollars, for it effectively deepened the racial antagonism between white and black labor. The Rosenwald Fund is still subsidizing this policy of compensating the black worker for his social inferiority by teaching him needless skills.

In 1900 Washington took the next logical step and founded the National Negro Business League to promote business enterprise, not realizing that in a dominant white economy the black man could exercise such "enterprise" only as the agent of white finance capital for the exploitation of his own race. Obviously the Washington policy led into a blind alley. And as far back as the late 1890's young Dr. DuBois decided that economic emancipation is impossible without a militant insistence on civil rights. DuBois never recognized, for all his early vindictiveness against the Washington school, that civil libertarianism under capitalism is merely the political counterpart of the laissez faire economy which Booker T. Washington wholly accepted and in which Negroes, with their particular historic handicaps, could never be more than a reservoir of proletarian labor. DuBois failed to integrate with his struggle for civil rights a new economic policy.

For this battle for civil rights he needed a black intelligentsia, because the belief in civil libertarianism in a capitalist economy means liberalism, and liberalism requires a formal education in social misunderstanding. Under the DuBois banner hundreds of colored men and women went in for a liberal education. In the brilliantly edited *Crisis* DuBois hailed every new M. A. and Ph. D. as a shock trooper for political freedom, social equality, and economic advance. Unfortunately a doctor of philosophy is far less likely to be a shock trooper than a shock absorber. And while Booker T. Washington's Negro masses were trained not to care for social equality, Dr. DuBois's militant intellectual Negro finally cut himself off from these masses by seeking preferential treatment in the white world as the New Negro. In short, Booker T. Washington's "good nigger" came to be led by Dr. DuBois's spoiled Negro, which meant of course that the black masses wound up without any leadership. When DuBois, a truly noble spirit, realized that thirty years of unremitting effort for civil liberties had led to racial chaos, he resigned from the N. A. A. C. P., and having never developed an economic philosophy, turned to black chauvinism. His latest battle cry is that the Negro must recognize the curse of segregation and build a black economy of his own. With what? Is Wall Street colored? Is finance capital high yaller? Today DuBois winds up pretty much where Booker T. Washington started. And so the colored people are leaderless.

The N. A. A. C. P. refuses, from sheer impotence, to adopt a modern economic program and is reduced to the functions of a black Civil Liberties Union and an anti-

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lynching lobby. The National Urban League, which continues the Booker T. Washington policy of toadying to white wealth through "scientific" social work, has in recent years supplied strike-breakers in Chicago, Cleveland, and other industrial centers. The Negro Business League and the "left" New Negro Alliance are petty Rotary clubs, arousing the black masses into fury against white shopkeepers in the black ghettoes. Under these circumstances, the black masses naturally fell for the likes of Marcus Garvey. Today they are falling for Father Divine, who claims to be "God." After six years of depression, which hit him harder than any other section of our working class, the Negro finds himself discriminated against by business, labor, and the various relief administrations. He is jobless, hungry, bewildered, and rapidly finding escape in racial chauvinism. And the Communist Party, anxious for a "mass base" in the black world which it lacks in the white, is catering to this very chauvinism. It promises to take the Negro into the Green Pastures of an independent black republic in the Deep South. Last May Day the Communists marched in "united front" with Father Divine, whose divinity is subsidized by the worst white reaction and by the grossest exploitation of his followers.

There is no future for the American Negro in chauvinism, right or left. There can be no black economy or black autonomy. Our first duty is to fight for the complete economic, social, and spiritual de-segregation of the American Negro. Otherwise he will continue to be used as a counter-revolutionary force in the American class struggle.

The Writers' Congress

By KENNETH BURKE

THE first American Writers' Congress, held in New York City from the twenty-sixth to the twenty-eighth of April, turned out to be an extremely impressive matter. Particularly to those of us who had been taught to think of a literary renaissance as six men assembled in the back room of a saloon to discuss the need of a new magazine, it was a revolution in itself to behold four thousand people packing the pit, balcony, gallery, and stage of Mecca Temple to consider the problems of literature.

The congress was a matter of deep concern to its members. The "vested interests" of the writers were fundamentally involved. When a speaker made a speech that attempted, let us say, to define what is meant by a "proletarian novelist," he was not merely in search of material to fill twenty minutes. He was fighting for his life. Again and again, as one heard these speeches, if one knew the work and methods of the speaker, one could read behind his remarks, no matter how general, the specific consciousness of his own role. He was trying to "write himself large," not in the sense of self-glorification, but in the sense of justifying his way of working and seeing by reference to general criteria.

It was for this reason that the congress had such a note of vitality, of deep engrossment. The members, no matter how little concerned they may have been with abstract philosophies, were every one of them exemplifying the philosophic mind: that is, their integrity as individuals depended upon the way in which they could link their work with historic movements as a whole. A speaker, in saying that art should do such and such, touched them at the roots of character, since his statements either admitted or rejected their own patterns of writing.

So much for the relation between the individual and the discussions. Above this and beyond it there was another attitude, equally important in vitalizing the congress. For the internal sectarian distinctions derived their whole point, their entire shaping, from a still broader basis, a basis on which the divergencies merged into unity. I refer to the general feeling that all these writers must somehow enlist themselves in a cultural struggle; that however meager their individual contributions may be, their work must be formed with relation to historic necessities; that what they say, and the way they say it, must involve fundamentally a concept of social responsibility, of *citizenship*. Maritain once made an important distinction between the artist and the citizen. On occasion, he said, their functions coincide. But on other occasions the requirements of the individual *as artist* are somewhat at odds with the requirements of the individual *as citizen*. And when these occasions arise, the requirements of the individual as citizen must prevail.

There were few members of the congress who would have listened without impatience if one had mentioned the name of Maritain. Yet this distinction of his was in the air. To consider art in relation to political necessities is really, in essence, to exemplify his thesis, though the temper of these members would certainly lead them to entertain far different concepts of the citizen than the Catholic Maritain would hold. There are many definitions and obscurings of such matters as "propaganda" and "political criticism," but after listening to the many different speakers I should suggest that the meaning of propaganda be conceived along the lines of this distinction: the "propaganda attitude" holds that *the tenor of an artist's work should be judged with reference to the needs of citizenship.*

While attempting to enlist cultural allies on the basis of the widest possible latitude, this congress was unquestionably made possible only by the vitality and organizational ability of the Communist Party. As one who is not a member of the Communist Party, and indeed whose theories of propaganda, expressed at one session, even called down upon him the wrath of the party's most demonic orators, I can state with some claim to "impartiality" my belief that no other organization in the country could have assembled and carried through a congress of this sort. The results justify the assertion that those who approach the issues of today from the standpoint of cultural survival must have sympathy at least with communism as a historical direction. Show me any brand of "Shirts" that could convoke a similar assemblage of "cultural allies." The thought is in itself enough to suggest a caricature: a Congress of Writers assembling to prepare for the burning of the books.

Out of the congress a League of American Writers has been formed to consolidate in one organization the efforts of those who, whatever their positive divergencies, can at least unite on the basis of negatives, as enemies of fascism and war. The league is to found a magazine that will print material embodying this attitude. The fact that a writer of such broad sympathies as Waldo Frank has been elected secretary should go far to guarantee the likelihood that the league's avowed policy of latitude will be maintained.

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Letters About Dreiser

Anti-Semites Both!

It is to laugh! Dreiser says, They are a noble people, for all their faults; let's kick 'em out. Hapgood counters, Why kick 'em out? Given half a chance they'll stop being themselves and become something else. The words are different, but the meaning is the same. For both, apparently, Jew *qua* Jew is undesirable.

Hapgood is a "liberal" who believes in tolerance. What sort of "tolerance" is this that accepts a man on condition that he "assimilate"; that is, lose those features that make him what he is? What is the sin that a man commits who is a Jew in religion and "race" at the same time that he is an American in culture and allegiance?

Easton, Pa., April 23 JOSHUA TRACHTENBERG

Dreiser and Haman

Any doubt as to Theodore Dreiser's anti-Semitism is removed by a rereading of the passage in the Book of Esther, Chapter 3, Verse 8. Haman seeks to persuade King Ahasuerus of Persia to destroy the Jews, saying: "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them." . . . Dreiser's arguments are as ancient as Israel itself, and as futile as the hostility of all anti-Semites from Haman to Hitler. Against Dreiser's condemnation of modern Jews as "very pagan" must be placed the words of the late President Charles W. Eliot, praising the social morality of Jews. We who are Zionists condemn Dreiser's criticism of Jewish life in the Diaspora, and we believe that the upbuilding of Palestine will strengthen rather than lessen Jewish self-respect and idealism in all lands. We are grateful to Hutchins Hapgood for his defense of the Jewish name. We caution our champions, however, against believing that "assimilation" will lessen anti-Semitism and that intermarriage will "dispose" of the Jew. There will always be considerable marriage between Gentiles and Jews on a voluntary basis, but the main body of Jews will prefer to marry among their own people, and so, too, the Gentiles. . . .

New York, April 20 LOUIS I. NEWMAN

Common Sense Protests

I know nothing of the circumstances surrounding this correspondence with Dreiser. Nor had I ever before heard of the person who presumes to "expose" him. . . . Anyone who knows Dreiser at all knows the following about him. First, he is not a politician, much less a diplomat or a theorist. In conversation or in correspondence he may say things merely because they come into his head or perhaps because at one time or another be believed them strongly or felt them. Second, he is absolutely honest and as a consequence frequently steps on people's toes; undoubtedly he wrote as he did because he felt as he did, whereas most people with similar views, while they would not suspect even a mild form of literary blackmail, would certainly be more guarded and tactful. Third, Dreiser came from the Middle West and he is still a Middle Westerner. It would be naive to expect him to retain all of that section's great virtues with none of its prejudices. Fourth, anyone who knows Dreiser knows that, prejudice or no prejudice, he would be among the first to rise up and protest if either fascism or Jew-baiting became widespread in this country. Fifth, Dreiser is a great and good man; for many years, both with the might of his pen and in action, he has proved himself not only always on the side of the oppressed but one of the strongest and most reliable allies that the liberals and radicals have.

It is for that reason that I find it distressing to catch *The Nation* in the act of attempting to cut Theodore Dreiser's throat. Distressing, because it means that once more liberalism is cutting its own throat: in attempting to fell an oak, it may prove to have amputated its last toe. . . .

New York, April 25 SELDEN RODMAN,
Editor, *Common Sense*

Dreiser's Chauvinism

The Dreiser correspondence proves again that in spite of the psychological analysis of the author of "The American Tragedy," when it comes to the Jewish question, the prejudices of centuries take the upper hand. In other words, instead of Dreiser's concentrating and using his intellectual power to counteract the destructive forces of chauvinism, he becomes himself a victim of those forces. As a Jew I am very thankful to Mr. Hapgood for his wonderful reply to Dreiser's ridiculous assertions. It shows again how all liberty-loving people must be on guard in order to ward off fascism and its by-products if a man of Dreiser's caliber can so easily be recruited into the forces of the "Black Hundreds."

New York, April 18 ABRAHAM ROTTENBERG

The Logical Solution

After a careful reading of Herr Dreiser's remarkable letters with their unique statistics, I have come to realize what should have been obvious before—that the poor unfortunate Aryans are so sadly in the minority in the United States and at such a disadvantage that the only logical conclusion is for the Aryans to withdraw to some land where they will find the streets more pleasantly crowded on Yom Kippur and where there will be opportunity for all in banking and legal circles.

Ridgewood, N. J., April 15 LEONARD D. WEIL

Making the Jews Responsible

Mr. Dreiser suggests two solutions, segregation in a separate country somewhere on earth or assimilation in the country in which the Jew resides. Segregation, as pointed out by Mr. Hapgood, is impossible even if it were desirable. Assimilation means that the Jewish religion is to be forsaken. For what other religion is not stated. Should Jews become Catholics, Protestants, or non-believers? Why is the Jewish religion singled out as the religion that must be dropped for the good of the world and especially for the good of America? Why not assimilate the Catholics into the American pattern by dropping Catholicism? Why not assimilate Protestantism by dropping Protestantism? . . .

Jews cannot overrun America or any other country, and never in their history have they manifested that tendency. . . . The Jewish religion is not a religion of expansion. It does not proselytize. Nor can a person not born a Jew become Jewish even though he may choose to live as a Jew.

Jews are not alien to the United States any more than any other religious group that migrated here. America started

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with Jews as a part of its population. . . . Unfortunately we began our life as an independent nation by borrowing an economic system from the Old World without inquiring into its inherent defects. As the system functioned somewhat satisfactorily until 1929, its defects were overlooked. Indeed, they were not even considered. We acted like a child who has inherited a fortune and then is suddenly brought face to face with the problems of finance taken for granted until then. The Jews did not plant the seeds of an economy solely for profit on American soil. This economy was the recognized economy, and Jews together with all other Americans adapted themselves to the rules by which it is run. Today the economy of our forefathers has proved to be inadequate and America is threatened with disaster because of the magnitude of its fundamental defects. And, lo and behold, the Jewish religion is blamed and the remedy of Jewish annihilation is prescribed.

"Is Dreiser Anti-Semitic?" That is not the question involved as I see it. These appear to me to be some of the questions involved: Is Mr. Dreiser attempting to make the Jewish people the "goat" of our present era of economic chaos? Is he trying to divert attention from the real cause of America's misery today? Is he trying to stir up religious strife and religious excuses so as to prevent a proper solution of our malady? Can we solve inherent defects of a cruel, inhuman, despotic, ruthless, irreligious, unsound economic order by focusing attention upon the manner in which a minority group of our American melting-pot worships God? Can we blame our troubles on any religion? Do not those who fear revolution delight in seeing the victims of uncontrolled capitalism quarrel about their gods?

Cleveland, Ohio, April 20 PHILIP SCHOENBERG

Racial Solidarity—a Myth

In his letter of December 28, 1933, Mr. Dreiser states that he would like to have the opinions of ten different Jews in various walks of life. I don't know in which walk I fit; but I have dabbled in all that he enumerates except the religious and legal. . . . I am in the advertising business—have been for fifteen years—and during this part of my career I have served hundreds of Jews and Gentiles, in practically all the walks of life Dreiser mentions. I have spent much time in the study of Jewish lore, ritual, customs. I am acquainted with the contents of Maimonides, Rashi, Talmud, Gratz. I spend more time with the Jewish Encyclopaedia than with the dictionary; and a copywriter must spend time with a dictionary. My mother's family played an important part in the renaissance of Yiddish folk literature in Warsaw, yet I haven't been in a synagogue since my Bar Mitzvah—except to get subject material. I do not react emotionally to ritual. When I think of Jewish holy days I think of special dishes that are nice to eat once a year, or of the bellyache that matzoth give me. When I was young I worked in factories where Jewish labor predominated; I observed it acutely during the transition into unionism that finally became so strong and eventually caused the disintegration of local industries with which I was connected. I managed a factory near New York that boasted many hundreds of Jewish workers. And for ten years I traveled on the road meeting Jew and Gentile in hundreds of cities and hamlets from coast to coast. I think I know something about Jews and Judaism. I think I know something about the Gentile's reaction to both. Racial solidarity among Jews could be accomplished only through some alchemic miracle.

The Jews I met in Germany looked with contempt on the Russian and Polish Jew. The Russian Jew chides his co-religionist by calling him a Galitzian Jew. The Park Avenue gang is very uppish about those who live west of Broadway. The West End Avenue Israelite can't stomach those who live above the Harlem River. The Grand Concourse crowd won't touch a Ghetto Jew with a ten-foot pole. Racial solidarity, poppycock! If Dreiser had studied our race half as closely as he studied the Troy collar worker he would have been appalled by the intra-racial incompatibility. As for the menace of the second generation of Jews: a Nazi doesn't have half the enmity for the Jew that the second generation has for the first. The menace of the second generation is something for Jewry to worry about.

Now let me tell Mr. Dreiser something: Jewish life is breaking up in America—breaking up very quickly. Jewish life can't maintain itself unless the Yiddish language is maintained; unless the orthodox synagogue is maintained. Get the story from the Yiddish newspapers. See what has happened to their circulations. Note the pitiful attempt they make to snare the second generation with English sections. As for the synagogues that Dreiser sees springing up all over America; that's news to me. Surely he doesn't mean the few "reform" churches with their hot-diggity Americanized "reverends"? They are as closely related to the orthodox synagogue as a Yogi meeting house is to a Catholic cathedral. . . .

I know at least a thousand second-generation Jews in this country but I don't know ten who speak Yiddish, much less read it. I don't know five who go to an orthodox synagogue even on Yom Kippur, the holy of holy days. I don't know ten who have ever been inside a Yiddish theater. I don't know one who speaks Hebrew. Some know how to pray in Hebraic but they can't translate the words they speak—they were just taught how to read the ideographs; and these latter are not young by any means. The third generation doesn't know what it is all about: do I have to tell Mr. Dreiser what has happened to immigration since the war?

I used to know many academic anti-Semites but unfortunately the larger number were Jews. Mr. Hitler has driven most of them back into the fold. Despite Mr. Hitler to the contrary, the Jewish Communist is anti-Semitic. Some of my best friends and worst enemies are Jews. Some of my best friends and worst enemies are Gentiles. The reasons for these extremes are definitely not racial. When I am cheated by a Jew the reason is either economic or psychopathic. When I am cheated by a Gentile the same reasons prevail. I have heard many Jews discuss money. But I have heard more Gentiles discuss money because I know more Gentiles—because there are more Gentiles. . . . The best client I have is a Jew. I will take his word for anything—he has never broken it to me. More Gentiles work for him than Jews; because his organization is the result of a series of sequences; because that is the way it accidentally shaped up. The second best client I have is a Gentile. His word is also inviolate.

I believe that the Jewish bourgeoisie hates the Communists just as much as the Gentile bourgeoisie does. I believe that a record of Jewish votes cast in the last generation would show them to be preponderantly major-party conscious; typical solid citizens. Those who march on May 1 and wave red flags do so because their economic situation is precarious. . . .

I hate anti-Semites for the same reason that I hate anti-anything; for the same reason that I hate the professional pro-Semite. But I hate more intensely any man . . . who arouses controversy with guesswork and ignorance. But I am sorry that the real Jew is nearly extinct. I refer to the devout, unmeddling Jew who kept to his class, who had a tremendous respect for his religion and ritual, who had an austerity about him that was positively aesthetic; a salty fellow who is dying out because the Jews have no hierarchy. The curtain descended when the Russian Revolution put the boots to Jewish traditions within the Muscovite realm.

New York, April 13 HARRY SERWER

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Labor and Industry

Insurgency in Equity

By HEYWOOD BROUN

THE actor in America was the first white-collar man to realize that he had a part in the labor movement. Approximately twenty years ago an organization was formed, and by 1919 affiliation with the A. F. of L. had been completed. That was the year of the big strike. The movement took the managers by surprise. They had heard talk, even from the actors themselves, about the impossibility of players using the strike as a weapon. Then there was the tradition of the theater: "the show must go on" and so forth. And naturally there was a great deal of talk about romance and glamor, and many a manager was eager to point out that the actor was a creative artist and that it was preposterous for him to adopt the devices of bricklayers and truck drivers.

Nevertheless, the actors did strike and with a good deal of effectiveness. Actors' Fidelity, the company union, contained some of the great names of the stage, but the rank and file was solidly for Equity and it also enlisted its own group of stars, many of whom made distinct sacrifices for sheer principle since they themselves had no immediate stake in organization. The royal family of Barrymore joined up, and Uncle John Drew came over from the Racquet Club to pledge his allegiance. Mr. Drew was probably the only person who belonged to both the A. F. of L. and the Racquet and Tennis Club, and he was certainly the Park Avenue organization's only striker.

One of the first moves of Equity was to get a war chest and to that end the actors gave a show over in the Lexington Avenue Opera House. Many actors were surprised to find that it was possible to get along without a producer. They were treading on new ground and finding out certain things which were heady and exciting. Whether by design or accident all the dramatic values were in their favor. For instance, there was the debut of Jim Barton. He had been a burlesque comedian for a number of seasons before he got his first chance to play on Broadway. When the strike call came, he was rehearsing in a production of the Shuberts. He walked out and joined the strike. When he was announced at the strike benefit along with the Wynns and the Barrymores and the famous names known to the readers of electric lights, there was something of a let-down. Here was a break in the procession of stars. But Jim came out and danced and the walls came tumbling down. That was a debut, and fitting for a man who had cast his bread upon the waters.

I want you to gather the impression that even on the picket line the actor and the actress carried glamor and color. No labor war ever had such a romantic surface. And in the long run that was unfortunate. A great many actors today have forgotten everything about the strike except the hip! hip! hurray! Some of the leaders, indeed, seem not quite aware that Equity is a labor union. And the strike would not and could not have been won but for the fact that the players had made alliances with their fellow-workers in their A. F. of L. affiliation. I was a dramatic critic at the time of the strike and I remember that I was assigned to an opening. Not until I reached the theater did I learn that the strike call had just gone out and that there would be no opening that evening nor any show in town save one fly-by-night venture which, as I remember, had made a separate peace.

But the triumph of the first skirmish by no means indicated eventual victory. The managers, although taken by surprise, were themselves well organized. They had names to draw upon in their Fidelity group and the world is filled with talented amateurs. William A. Brady, the most able and the most pugnacious of the managers, undertook to break the strike by reopening a melodrama he had put on a few weeks before. I think it was called "At 9:45." Mr. Brady took a part himself and filled out the rest of the cast with Fidelity folk and a few newcomers.

But at this point the stage hands and the musicians stepped in. They refused to work with strike-breakers. There would be no one to raise the curtain and no one to handle the lights. It was the solid front which defeated the managers. They made proffers of peace and Equity won a victory all along the line. Unfortunately all this happened more than fifteen years ago. Not very much water has flowed under the bridge since. Equity has drifted. In fact during the last few seasons its leaders have more or less taken the attitude, "What's the use of making any demands. The theatrical business is in too sad a plight and you can't whip a dead horse."

In addition to drifting a great many Equity members have done a deal of forgetting. I have heard actors denounce the stage hands and the rules of their union with the same vehemence employed by the managers. A distinct wedge has been driven between the workers. And now an insurgent movement is well under way. The Actors' Forum has been organized as a group within Equity. It has openly promised that it means to use no splitting tactics and that it has no belief in dual unionism. But it does seek representation in the leadership of Equity. Quite frankly it is boring from within. Its program, however, can hardly be termed radical or fantastic. Before the Equity strike a manager was privileged to rehearse his company without pay as long as he pleased. The strike established a four-week period for dramatic shows and a five-week period for musicals. And now actors are asking why the theater should be the only institution in the world where the employee gives his services gratis for even a limited period. The Actors' Forum asks a payment of $25 a week during rehearsals.

The rulers of Equity have been less than scrupulously fair in meeting the drive of the Forum. They have raised the red herring and whirled it over their heads with fury. At the membership meeting on March 1 a policeman was called in to remove a member who demanded the privileges of the floor. It is true, to be sure, that some of the newer theatrical groups are heavily represented in the Forum, but many actors have allied themselves with this wing upon the

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simple belief that Frank Gillmore has been president too long and has grown just a wee bit inefficient. One would hardly think that this constituted communism. Mr. Gillmore may be as good as his supporters assert but he is a little lacking in tact. One of the candidates for the council on the orthodox slate is a young actor whose stage debut was as a strike-breaker in Mr. Brady's production of "At 9:45." That was fifteen years ago, but actors are noted for long memories and they are beginning to ask whether Equity is still a labor union.

Lettuce—with American Dressing

By JAMES RORTY

WHAT happens in the Imperial Valley in California—the strikes, killings, arrests, kidnappings, beatings—is both shocking and interesting, as I can personally testify. But what is more interesting is why these things happen—why "law and order" has broken down, why there is no prospect of peace in the valley, and why thus far neither the state nor the federal government has been able to do much about it.

I visited the valley during the last week of February, while a strike of the lettuce packers and trimmers was in progress. Eager for information, I asked questions of everybody I could get hold of—for the brief period of less than three days. Then the blow fell. I was a very aggrieved reporter when the sheriff's deputies, after keeping me incomunicado overnight in the El Centro jail, escorted me across the line into Arizona. The Imperial Valley is a fascinating hell-hole, and I hated to leave it. I wanted to talk at length with the pea-growing sheriff who arrested and deported me—not, I am convinced, because he wanted to, but because Chet Moore, the secretary of the Western Growers' Protective Association, told him to. I wanted to talk to the vigilantes, the automobile salesmen and bank clerks, who beat up liberal lawyers, strike organizers, and journalists like myself, not because they want to, but because they must, on penalty of losing jobs or business. I wanted to talk with the gentle, fine-featured Mexicans whose present servitude is not very different from that imposed upon them by the conquistadors and the padres. When the cantaloupes ripen, the pickers will probably strike again, not because they want to but because it is as impossible to live forever without hope as it is to live without bread. Finally, I wanted to talk with the growers—the "patriots," as they call themselves—and find out how they were able to suppress two honest government reports on conditions in the valley. I was not permitted to do any of this. In fact, I was a hundred miles the other side of the California border before I could even send a telegram. But here is the essential pattern as I saw it. It is not unique. Conditions are as bad or worse in Arizona, Colorado, and southern Texas.

The major crops in the valley are lettuce, cantaloupe, and peas—all grown "out of season" with respect to Eastern markets, all highly perishable, all produced on irrigated desert land lying from 50 to 150 feet below sea level. The conditions of production are industrial rather than agricultural in the older sense. Ninety per cent of the crops in the valley are grown or financed by a small group of large shipper-growers. Through a pro-rating agreement the lettuce acreage in the Imperial Valley, which was approximately 30,000 acres in 1933, was reduced for the 1934-35 season to 16,789 acres. Of this acreage only 3,510 acres are tilled by so-called "independent" growers—whose independence, incidentally, is qualified by the fact that the big shipper-growers to whom most of them sell control the facilities for packing and shipping, and hence can more or less set the price paid to the growers. The same situation is found in the other major crops.

Labor in this industrialized agriculture divides into two categories: the shed workers and the field or "stoop" labor. The former, in general, are 100 per cent American fruit tramps. Many of them have a semi-permanent employee status with respect to the large shipper-growers and move from one area to another as the crops mature. Since the depression, however, the number of these migratory workers has been greatly increased by the accession of all sorts of destitute and dispossessed people—industrial and white-collar workers from the cities, whole families of dispossessed share-croppers from Oklahoma, Texas, and the deep South.

The field workers, or "stoop labor," are chiefly Mexicans. In the report made by Will J. French, J. L. Leonard, and Simon J. Lubin to the National Labor Board a year ago, it was estimated that there were then in the valley about 15,000 Mexicans, 3,000 Filipinos, and smaller groups of Japanese, Negroes, and Hindus. Since then there has been a considerable "repatriation" of Mexicans, for whom there was no employment. But to compensate for this there has been a fairly constant movement of Mexicans across the border, as well as a steady influx of migrants from the East into the valley. So that whereas there were in January, 1934, between 4,000 and 5,000 unemployed in the valley, plus their women and children, the number had increased rather than decreased a year later when I was there. John R. Lestner, the deputy labor commissioner in El Centro, estimated that with opportunities for employment for from 5,000 to 7,000 stoop laborers, there are now in the valley from 8,000 to 10,000 Mexicans plus 5,000 Filipinos. In 1932 the hourly scale for stoop labor dropped to as low as 10 cents; this year it was 25 and 30 cents, but despite the efforts of the labor commissioner to enforce the state law, the workers continue to be exploited by the labor contractors, who sell them at so much a head to the growers.

The three-men-to-one-job surplus of stoop labor is fully matched by the surplus of shed workers. It was this surplus, together with the strong-arm methods of the growers, that broke the strike of lettuce packers and trimmers this year. The shed owners simply went out on the highway and picked up migratory workers, with the result that by the end of the strike about a thousand new packers and trimmers had been added to the labor pool.

All this labor is heavily subsidized by relief. Both for stoop labor and shed labor the wage scale is so low and em-

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ployment so intermittent that only at the peaks of the harvest seasons do the workers make subsistence wages. You hear tales of the big stakes made by the fruit tramps when the harvest is heavy, but the sober estimate of the United States Department of Labor representative in the valley was that the *family* income of the average fully employed fruit tramp was under $600 a year, and that the family income of the stoop laborers ran under $400 a year.

Concerning the living conditions of both the fruit tramps and the stoop labor, the Leonard-French-Lubin report is admirably frank:

> This report must state that we found filth, squalor, an entire absence of sanitation, and a crowding of human beings into totally inadequate tents or crude structures built of boards, weeds, and anything that was found at hand to give a pitiful semblance of a home at its worst. Words cannot describe some of the conditions we saw.

What I saw during my brief stay in the valley fully confirmed this statement. During the peak of the lettuce harvest men and in some cases women, although this is against the law, are worked under the frantic speed-up of the split-bench system from four in the morning until ten at night. Hence the demand of the Fruit and Vegetable Workers' Union of California for the ending of the split-bench system (a combination of piece work for the packers and hourly wages for the trimmers which speeds up both), for time and a third for all work over ten hours a day, and for the privilege of hiring a "booster" or substitute to relieve a packer or trimmer when he is about to drop in his tracks.

To complete the picture of this below-sea-level, sweated, overpopulated, 130-degrees-Fahrenheit Eden it is only necessary to add that, with the exception of the banks and individuals—including Harry Chandler of the Los Angeles *Times*—who own the land and lease it to the shipper-growers, nobody has been consistently making money in the valley since 1930. The Labor Board report states that "in spite of all economies, and with wages during 1933 as low as 12½ and 15 cents per hour, the shippers point out that they have lost an average of $3,500,000 per year for the past four years." To these losses there might well be added the heavy relief bill paid by the federal government, and also the cost of bringing water into the valley by tank car during last year's drought. (What little water there was appears to have been preempted by Harry Chandler to irrigate the several hundred thousand irrigated acres he owns south of the line in Mexico.)

Off-season lettuce is grown all the way from Florida to California. The industry has yielded huge profits in the past, but its economics are extremely fragile and also subject to fantastic forms of racketeering. The shipper-growers have an organization—the Western Growers' Protective Association—but as far as I could learn from its secretary, C. B. Moore, its activities are restricted to fighting adverse legislation and breaking strikes. Mr. Moore stated flatly that the association is not interested in marketing: that was left to the individual responsibility of the grower or shipper-grower. The result is a sort of chronic chaos; the price, set by commission merchants in the Eastern and Middle Western markets, varies from day to day. If you are a shipper-grower, you load and "roll" your cars, and then attempt to divert them while they are on the road to whatever market seems to offer the best price at the moment. Since all or most of the growers in all the producing areas are doing this, markets are frequently glutted, hundreds of tons of lettuce are spoiled and dumped; other huge quantities of lettuce wither and blow away in the fields; racketeers flourish. A favorite device of the less scrupulous commission merchants is to buy a given crop of lettuce, for which the grower pays the cost of harvesting, trimming, and packing. The commission merchant then reports that as the Kansas City market was glutted, he sent it to Chicago, which was also glutted by the time it got there; then it went to Baltimore, and by that time it had spoiled. Maybe it was and maybe it wasn't. The grower loses in any case. Everybody I talked to in the valley agreed that the small independent grower, the man who cultivates forty acres or less, practically always loses. His condition is little better than that of the fruit tramps and the stoop labor; which makes the suggested remedy of subsistence homesteads as a device for anchoring the floating labor seem highly questionable.

Is it any wonder that law and order and human decency have gone completely to pot in the valley, that we are presented with a matured and functioning vigilante terror directed not only against Communists but against labor marching under whatever banner? In his report to the Department of Labor, the Department of Agriculture, and the National Labor Board, General Pelham D. Glassford wrote nearly a year ago:

> After more than two months of observation and investigation in Imperial Valley it is my conviction that a group of growers have exploited a "Communist" hysteria for the advancement of their own interests; that they have welcomed labor agitation which they could brand as "red" as a means of sustaining supremacy by mob rule, thereby preserving what is so essential to their profits—cheap labor. . . .

After the Communist-led strike of the Agricultural and Cannery Workers' Union last year, the growers indicated their willingness to enter collective-bargaining relations with a bona fide A. F. of L. union. They had their opportunity to do this when the Fruit and Vegetable Workers' Union made the extremely moderate request that they permit the enforcement in the Imperial Valley of the strike settlement approved by the Regional Labor Board last year in the Salinas Valley, which involved many of the same grower-shippers and many of the same fruit tramps. But the barons of El Centro stood pat. They hired gunmen as strike-breakers and the sheriff deputized them. They broke the strike, and now C. B. Lawrence, secretary of the union, declares that "there are at least 700 men under arms in the valley, taking the law into their own hands."

Peace in the Imperial Valley? Europe has a better chance of it.

In an Early Issue

Fort Peck:
An American Siberia

By JAMES RORTY

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Books and Drama

Poem

By LINCOLN REIS

You who have questioned the moment, who have asked
If I have loved love itself, your heart but desire's
Convenience; you, become suspicion,
Othello now, Francesca soon forgotten,
Have with this doubt measured eternity.
Let us advance no further, love retreats
Dead before its birth; but your lips
Commend argument, and I would remember
The word forgotten.
This is the end of silence, begins
The tongue's intensity, the body's death.

The Law of Recovery

The Formation of Capital. By Harold G. Moulton. The Brookings Institution. $2.50.

FOR five and a half years economic science has been virtually prostrate before one of the most severe crises in history. The feebleness of current economic thought has not been due to lack of capable theoreticians or, as popular fancy would have it, to dissension within the ranks of the profession. On the contrary, there is no sphere in which orthodoxy has such a paralyzing and all-embracing grip. Even today most economists would argue that our economic system is by nature self-regulating. While granting that in recent years the adjustments have been halting and inadequate, they cling to the belief that this depression, like former ones, must ultimately be overcome by "natural" forces such as the need for replenishing stocks and replacing worn-out capital equipment.

In their concern for restoring business activity, orthodox economists dare not be too squeamish regarding such questions as the distribution of wealth and the location of economic control. They begin with the simple and incontestable fact that the urge for profits is the mainspring of the capitalist mechanism. From this it follows that any step which increases the prospect of earnings is bound to stimulate production. In a period of business expansion this process is almost automatic. But in a period of economic stagnation it is evident that profits can be increased only at the expense of other types of income, notably wages and salaries. Although the reduction of payroll temporarily serves to curtail the demand for consumers' goods, it is argued that this loss will be more than offset by the new construction that will be stimulated by the prospect of higher profits.

Until recently the necessity of wage-cutting as a way out of a depression has been accepted by practically all professional economists. But with the growing power of organized labor and other economic blocs, it has become politically impossible to apply the ruthless measures of deflation which orthodox economics prescribes as a means of restoring profits. Consequently there has emerged a group of younger writers who believe that the same end can be achieved by the expedient of raising prices. Some of this group are impelled by the logic of their argument to advocate an increase of wages as well as higher prices, in the belief that an expansion of consumer purchasing power will stimulate general business activity. This contention, which formed the theoretical basis of the NRA, is rejected by most economists on the ground that increased wages mean higher business costs, and thus tend to diminish rather than encourage profits. But when prices are increased independently of wages—or in excess of wages—it is obvious that the result of price-raising is similar to that of cost-cutting except that the wage reductions are concealed.

For the past few years a violent intellectual and political battle has centered around the conflicting programs of the wage-cutting and price-boosting camps. From the standpoint of pure theory, the former unquestionably has maintained the upper hand; but in the political struggle the price-raisers have won in all countries except in the so-called gold bloc—where inflation has an ugly connotation. Twenty-five million unemployed throughout the world will testify to the fact that neither program has been successful, yet no serious attempt has been made, until recent months, to use the tools of modern research in probing to the roots of our difficulties.

Under these conditions it is impossible to overemphasize the importance of the factual studies of the Brookings Institution, analyzing the forces which make for stability or anarchy in our economic system. The first two of these, "America's Capacity to Produce" and "America's Capacity to Consume," were significant but scarcely revolutionary in their findings. "The Formation of Capital" assembles in the compass of 200 pages data which not only undermine the theoretical structure of orthodox economics, but are equally destructive of the views of the price-raisers. On the constructive side it advances an explanation of the paradox of want in the midst of plenty which offers at least a hope that it may be resolved.

The flaw in the reasoning of the classical economists is to be found, according to the study, in their explanation of the process of capital formation. They have invariably assumed that the rate of expansion of capital goods—factories, machinery, and equipment—depends directly on the proportion of the national income which is saved. Obviously some such relationship has to exist if the economic system is self-adjusting. According to theory, if exceptional opportunities for profit-making are discovered, the interest rate will rise and people will be induced to limit their consumption and to increase their savings so as to invest in new enterprises. Lowering of the interest rate, on the other hand, will discourage savings and increase consumption. This assumption was doubtless justified in a simpler economy where men used their savings to repair fences, build barns, or otherwise extend their capital equipment. But its validity has been challenged by certain modern economists, notably Keynes and Schlichter, who claim that under present conditions savings and investment have practically no relationship to each other. Individuals place their surplus funds in banks or they buy securities, but they rarely invest directly in capital goods. The decision regarding the expansion of a factory or the adoption of new labor-saving machinery, upon which economic activity so largely depends, rests in the hands of corporations and their banking affiliates, while the actual financing is carried out through the use of credit without regard to the volume of available savings.

The validity of this objection has been fully borne out by the Brookings study, which presents statistics to show that new factories are built and up-to-date machinery installed when consumption is expanding rather than contracting, and this process bears little or no relationship to the rate of savings. Mr. Moulton points out, for example, that the amount of money going into capital construction increased uniformly in the United States from 1922 to 1929 without regard for the phenomenal rise in savings. In fact, the new financing for such purposes seems to have been greater between 1924 and 1926 than in the halcyon days of 1927-29. Savings, on the other hand, appear to be related to the manner in which

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income is distributed rather than to the rate of interest. Only the wealthy can save substantial amounts. In "America's Capacity to Consume," the Brookings Institution found that the 219,000 families in the United States which had an income of more than $20,000 in 1929 accumulated 54 per cent of the total savings of all families, while at the other end of the scale 59 per cent of the entire number had only 1.6 per cent of the savings. Or, to put it more graphically, the 24,000 families with an income of more than $100,000 were able, on the average, to save from 40 to 66 per cent of their income, without sacrificing comforts or even luxuries, while the 5,900,000 families whose income was less than $1,000 went into debt to the extent of $60 per family. The tendency toward inequality in the distribution of income was accentuated during the twenties, and the rate of savings also increased rapidly, but there was not in this period a corresponding rise in capital development.

Thus thrift, after long service in the hero's role, has been cast for the villain in the modern economic drama. And the result has been disastrous. During the second half of the last decade the supply of funds available for investment increased out of all proportion to the volume of securities being floated, while consumers' incomes, rising only moderately, became increasingly less able to absorb the potential output of our existing plant and equipment. This led to a tremendous expansion in the volume of our foreign investments, followed in 1928 and 1929 by an extravagant inflation in the value of common stocks. Large amounts of potential purchasing power became frozen in the security markets, and were destroyed by the subsequent deflation of credit. The much-vaunted self-regulating mechanism, clogged by tariffs, monopoly control, and the unsound use of bank credit, became wholly useless. Prices and costs failed to adjust themselves to the lower volume of consumer buying power. As further expansion became clearly unprofitable, the capital-goods industries collapsed, throwing hundreds of thousands out of employment and further decreasing buying power.

The key to our difficulties, then, lies in the distribution of income. True, this is not altogether a new discovery. A German economist by the name of Karl Marx suggested some years ago that the tendency toward an increasing concentration of wealth might lead to difficulties in disposing of the product of industry. But the Brookings study shows us *how* the process operates. If its analysis is correct, the traditional remedy of increasing profits at the expense of the working class can function only when there is an actual shortage of capital in relation to productive opportunities. Otherwise the profits which are obtained at the expense of mass purchasing power merely pass into the coffers of a class which has satisfied its needs. Lacking constructive outlet, they stagnate as idle bank deposits or are absorbed to meet government deficits.

An intuitive recognition of this difficulty has led to a veritable avalanche of proposals for increasing consumer purchasing power, several of which have been incorporated in the New Deal. Upon analysis, however, most of these—including the NRA, the AAA, and the Roosevelt monetary policy—prove to be merely price-raising devices, which tend to increase profits at the expense of real wages. The others are definitely inflationary, and would either discourage production through increased costs, or ultimately lead to an accumulation of profits in the hands of a minority.

Nor can there be any easy remedy for the maladjustments of our economic structure. In theory, social taxation is an ideal tool for effecting that redistribution of wealth which is essential to economic stability. But social taxation has not prevented Great Britain from suffering acutely from the depression, nor has it appreciably lessened the inequalities of income. Applied with sufficient ruthlessness it might prevent the accumulation of great fortunes, and thereby avert a repetition of the events leading to the 1929 boom. But although this would bring greater stability it would not assure the full use of our productive resources unless simultaneous steps were taken to prevent underconsumption. What is needed, apparently, is some device which will assure a constant flow of consumers' purchasing power, and yet will neither interfere with profits nor be inflationary in its effect on the general price level. Consumer credit meets the first two of these demands, but runs afoul of the third. A system of unemployment reserves, financed by a tax on industry, would tend to stabilize purchasing power, but would constitute a burden either on industry or the consumer, depending on how much of the cost would be passed on in higher prices. It is extremely doubtful, moreover, whether such a scheme could pay large enough benefits to maintain buying power at an undiminished level in case of a serious crisis. The only device which would seem to meet all technical objections would be a security program giving all workers the equivalent of full pay when thrown out of employment, with these payments financed by a tax on incomes rather than on business or consumers. Granting that certain dislocations are inevitable under any system, this scheme should prevent such maladjustments from having a deleterious effect on consumer demand and thus tend to stabilize the growth of the capital-goods industries. It would give freer scope for individual initiative and profit-making, but would prevent these profits from accumulating in the hands of a few persons.

Two serious objections may be raised to these conclusions, one theoretical, the other political. In the first place, it may be argued that even if the above-mentioned measures were put into effect, the profit system would inevitably produce new inequalities in income, which, in turn, would produce new dislocations. This, indeed, is possible, and may in the long run constitute an irremediable defect in the capitalist system. The more immediate difficulty, however, is the practical one of obtaining any fundamental redistribution of income—by social taxation, security legislation, or any other means—as long as wealth remains intrenched in the seat of political power. It is significant that in all the New Deal legislation there has not been one measure that attempted such a redistribution. This may have been defensible as long as economic theory gave little hint of the seat of the maladjustments in the capitalist mechanism. But it will be difficult to avoid the obvious implications of the Brookings Institutions's epoch-making study.

MAXWELL S. STEWART

Simple Annals

Hungry Men. By Edward Anderson. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.

Not for Heaven. By Dorothy McCleary. Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.

THE only reason for reviewing these novels together is that they were joint winners of a certain prize. Were it not for that circumstance the first of them would deserve little attention beyond the modicum allotted to it merely by virtue of its concern with the dispossessed. The members of the prize committee probably felt themselves bound to recognize the proletarian note, however feebly struck; and doubtless they were not sorry to settle upon a novel which, while it showed the state of the country to be bad, tended nevertheless to say that nothing was going to "happen" as a result. Mr. Anderson, it seems, does not expect a revolution in America, and his novel gives his reasons. They narrow down to a single observation, which is that the dispossessed, lacking both the desire and the ability for action, will go on almost indefinitely

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in the hope that things will somehow get better for them. But it is questionable whether Mr. Anderson's hero, an aimless and foolish jazz-musician out of a job, proves any such thing. He is too feeble, and his odyssey is too tame, to prove anything except that he is just what he is. He does not succeeed in seeming representative. And "Hungry Men" is the kind of novel which if not representative is nothing at all.

Miss McCleary, on the other hand, aims at an individual, and so completely achieves one in Mrs. Bostwick that the achievement itself, like all individual things, remains indefinable. Mrs. Bostwick would seem to be defined by her passions—for growing vegetables, for feeding her old horse Ned, for remembering her girlhood with Mame Towser, for being unclean. But the sum of these is far from giving us Mrs. Bostwick, who rather gives us herself in every move she makes. She is one of the most entertaining and appalling old fools in fiction. Original from the ground up, fiercely herself and stubbornly inviolable, she is possessed of an energy the source of which is never stated because it could not be stated and in fact did not need to be stated. Her relations to her son and daughter, to the son's wife and to Mame Towser, to the neighbors and to the Methodist preacher who vainly wishes to convert her—these relations express her, and yet here again it is rather that she seems all along to be expressing herself. She would be what she is in a world in which there were no people, though in that case we should not be there to appreciate her. What we appreciate in her is something over and above her humanity—something purely heathen, primeval, and timeless. It doesn't even describe her to say that she is Irish. Indeed, I shall make no further attempts to describe her, but shall simply recommend her as one of the most valuable persons I have encountered in American fiction. She seems to me to be what fiction is for, and I find it difficult to believe that I shall ever forget her.

MARK VAN DOREN

A Legendary Hero

Hindenburg and the Saga of the German Republic. By Emil Ludwig. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. The John C. Winston Company. $3.50.

IN 1866 a young lieutenant is wounded by an Austrian bullet in the battle of Königsgrätz. In 1934 he dies as the first President of the Third Reich. Between these dates lie the rise, the glory, and the downfall of the Second Reich and the ill-fated inception of the Third.

If I were to offer criticism of Emil Ludwig's work, it would be that he leans over backward to be fair to the man who was so largely responsible for the misfortune of hundreds of thousands of persons who, like the author himself, were driven by Hitler into exile. Himself a republican and a pacifist, Emil Ludwig brings to his subject that sympathetic understanding without which no biographer can depict the personality of his hero with anything approaching objectiveness. The reader follows the young Hindenburg through the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 and through the bloody shambles of Gravelotte and St. Privat in the Franco-German War (1870). He sees him in Sedan, an eyewitness of Napoleon's surrender. Then, a comparatively young man, Hindenburg is appointed to the General Staff, and later becomes lieutenant general and commanding general of an army corps. Life becomes a matter of deadening routine, and in 1911, at the age of sixty-four, General von Hindenburg retires from active service with the intention of spending his remaining years placidly in Hanover. Three years later the Great War put an end to this idyl. Casting about for a leader who would retrieve Germany's fortunes on the eastern front, the General Staff remembered Hindenburg, made him Colonel General, and sent him to the front together with General Erich Ludendorff to stay the Russian offensive. A few days after their arrival the German army won its greatest victory of all times at Tannenberg. Hindenburg became the object of frenzied public adulation. His position in German history was made.

A vast amount has been written about Tannenberg and its real hero. No serious historian has ever acknowledged Hindenburg's responsibility for this achievement, but in the eyes of the masses he has always been the victor of Tannenberg. It was as the hero of Tannenberg that he was made President of the Republic in 1925 and as hero of Tannenberg he induced the German people to accept his decision when, in the last years of his life, he delivered the nation into the hands of Hitler and his National Socialist followers. Herr Ludwig devotes a considerable part of his book to the investigation of the Tannenberg legend. Besides Hindenburg there were two men who claimed credit for the victory which decided the fate of East Prussia. One, General Ludendorff, has just received belated recognition from the Hitler government. The other was General von Prittwitz. Major General Hoffmann of Brest-Litovsk "fame," who went through the battle of Tannenberg as first officer of the General Staff, is Emil Ludwig's authority for the contention that neither Hindenburg nor Ludendorff had anything more than an accidental connection with that historic event. When the two arrived in East Prussia von Prittwitz's plan of operation was practically complete. Hindenburg and Ludendorff played a purely passive role. They stood by while von Prittwitz launched his campaign. Tactical directions given by Ludendorff, nominally on Hindenburg's authority, were so impossible that his subordinates refused to carry them out. General von François, who commanded the first infantry division, years afterward remarked scathingly that Tannenberg was won not with but in spite of the assistance of Ludendorff-Hindenburg.

Hindenburg remained a demi-god through all the vicissitudes of his later years. "How will posterity judge me?" he once asked a friend. "I lost the greatest war in history." And well might he ask! "It was Hindenburg," Emil Ludwig says, "who demanded a truce and forced Max von Baden to enter upon negotiations . . . who insisted upon acceptance of the enemy armistice with his hammering words, 'Nevertheless you must sign.'" Later, to be sure, the great General insisted that "a cowardly government and an exhausted people were to blame for it all." The same Hindenburg invented the legend of the "stab in the back," which Hitler and his followers have revived to vindicate their brutal aggression against "Socialists, Communists, and other traitors."

Ludwig does not oppress his readers with theories or dissertations on motives. He presents facts in interesting and thought-provoking juxtaposition and leaves it to the student to draw his own conclusions. Thus, without once charging the Field Marshal with bad faith, he points to the contradiction between Hindenburg's avowals of belief in and support of the German constitution and his countless violations of this instrument. He describes the events which led with inexorable certainty to government by decree and to the old President's betrayal of the radical parties to National Socialism and Hitler. This "grand old man," this man of "faith and trust," this personification of Prussian military honor and military spirit, betrayed the supporters who had given him the highest honor it was in their power to give.

Much of the force of an Emil Ludwig biography lies in the author's recognition of the fact that events make the man, not the man events. His Hindenburg is a mediocre German Junker who was whirled by the maelstrom of world events into the center of German happenings. A period in history which is rapidly receding from view, which the younger gener-

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ation sees as a wearying epoch of petty contradictions and partisan politics, emerges under Ludwig's pen as a tortured era of conflict and uncertainty, bearing in its womb all those furies of hell which infest the Germany of our day. The student of contemporary European history will profit from Ludwig's clear analysis of political conditions as much as from his vivid characterization of the man who stood immovable in the swift stream of German post-war events.

LUDWIG LORE

Disinterested Intelligence

Morals and Politics. By E. F. Carritt. Oxford University Press. $2.25.

THIS book is a splendid demonstration of the function of disinterested intelligence in politics, even though it is made at a time when many political-scientists still need to be reminded to what degree interest colors all political opinions and how difficult, if not impossible, "objective" analyses of political problems are. Professor Carritt's objectivity and fairness in dealing with various political theories are convincing, partly because he confines his examination to the moral philosophy which underlies various political programs without attempting an assessment of their social objectives, partly because his thought is an actual vindication of the power of intelligence, at its best, to transcend at least the obvious prejudices which usually color political opinion.

The task essayed by Professor Carritt is to review the moral and political theories of the most representative thinkers of modernity, and in the light of the conclusions drawn from these analyses to assess the legitimacy of such socio-moral concepts as rights, duties, liberty, equality, contract, and the general will. The systems examined are those of Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Bosanquet, T. H. Green, and Marx. The task is performed with such neat precision, so clear an eye for the essentials, such quick detection of the ambiguities and inconsistencies, and so comprehensive a view of the problems involved that the book, in spite of its brevity, must be regarded as an important contribution to philosophical, ethical, and political thinking.

The author's own convictions are stated in his consideration of John Locke: "Locke's account of political obligation, by no means without ambiguities or confusions and even manifest errors of historic fact and detail, is yet fundamentally sound, as opposed to all those we have been considering." Professor Carritt is particularly anxious to expose the inconsistencies in the thought of those who identify interest with obligation, and to that end subjects the thought of Hobbes, Spinoza, T. H. Green, and Marx to the most rigorous criticism. He believes that the errors of Rousseau's idea of the general will flow from this identification of political obligation with enlightened self-interest. After tracing the relation between Rousseau's concept of the general will and the metaphysical theory of the state as found in Hegel, Bosanquet, and others, he analyzes the ambiguities of the Hegelian theory: "The doctrine expounded might be taken to mean either that a perfectly good man would conscientiously obey a perfectly good state or that he would blindly obey any state"; but the ultimate effect of the metaphysical theory is to enjoin obedience to the actual state as "'the visible image of God' or the incarnation of the rational will."

In considering dialectical materialism Professor Carritt is particularly concerned to expose the error in the doctrine of inevitability. "The problem of organic development, as distinct from mechanical rearrangement, arises simply from the fact that something really new and therefore unpredictable comes about." The determinism in Marxism is, in other words, incompatible with the dialectical emphasis in its materialism, since the dialectic is really a symbol for reality as organic. About Marxism the author declares: "I know of several weighty arguments to show that some form of communistic society is the best cure for our present economic and social troubles but none of them seems to involve any philosophical doctrine, materialist, idealist, or dialectical." In criticizing the idea of inevitability in Marxism the author is probably not completely fair, certainly not to the Marxism of Lenin, who declared that there is always a way out for capitalism if a revolutionary class does not bar the way. The relation of social will to the objective factors of history is conceived in dialectical terms in Marxism, and at its best does not therefore arrive at as unqualified a determinism as he assumes.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

"Life, Warm and Stirring"

Roll River. By James Boyd. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.75.

MOVING with the majestic sweep of deep-running waters, "Roll River" carries James Boyd's talent to true literary achievement. It is a long book, covering 603 pages, but its length is not the result, one feels, of the present vogue of prolixity. "Roll River" is not unduly extended; you turn the pages and as you read you feel the story could not be told completely in less space. Always a serious and conscientious workman, Boyd has here lived up to his highest standards.

"Roll River" is a narrative of two lives and loves. It is the history of Clara Rand, daughter of the solid and sound small capitalist, John Rand, leading business figure of the town of Midian on the shores of a Pennsylvania river. It is also the history of Thomas Rand, Clara's nephew, and grandson of the fine old middle-class aristocrat who founded the Rand fortunes. The river of water and the river of life give the book its title. Boyd sets down his theme in one sentence: "Life, warm and stirring, had now renewed itself along this river down which he had rolled." It is of this unending stream of living and dying, the eternal flow of succeeding generations, that he writes.

As the book opens, Thomas Rand, close to death, half dreaming, half sleeping away the end of his days on this earth, lies in a hospital bed, thinking of his life, of his beloved Aunt Clara's life, of the many lives with which he has come in contact. So the dim and poignant memories of earliest childhood come to mind—the pathetic love affair of his Aunt Clara, a fruit of the repressed and unnatural conventions of the eighties and nineties, his school days, his own marriage and marital disaster, World War years in France, and frantic rescue efforts to save men entombed by a coal-mine disaster in one of the Rand properties.

Boyd has recreated an age, the spirit of an America that is past. His picture of life in the closing years of the nineteenth century is a successful recapture of days that are gone never to return. He has commemorated not only the physical attributes of that era, but, more deeply, the mental and spiritual qualities of a bygone time. In the story of Clara's tragic love he has reached a high point of fictional writing. And in his portraits of Clara and of that sturdy and fine old man, her father, he has created personalities that will linger long in the memory.

Boyd has also given expression to those old and ever-enduring characteristics of human life—faith and courage and hope and love—that epitomize the finest traits of man on earth. He writes as a romanticist, but a romanticist who is also truly

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realistic in his knowledge of the enduring elements of man's spirit. In Clara's words to her nephew as he lies in the dim border country, there is the shining glory of eternal verities:

> "But if there's anything," she said, "I know it's fine." She put her cheek down on his hands and quickly sat up smiling. "Look what we have made here from so little."

JAMES L. C. FORD

Preventive Justice

Declaratory Judgments. By E. M. Borchard. Cleveland: Banks-Baldwin Publishing Company. $8.50.

PROFESSOR BORCHARD is perhaps best known to the general public as a writer on questions of international law and relations. But he has not only filled the role of international publicist. He has also been an ardent law reformer. He has long championed the assumption of liability by the state for the wrongs of its servants, the recognition of which has been prevented by reasoning based on the medieval maxim that the king can do no wrong. Not long ago in "Convicting the Innocent" he dramatized the plight of the innocent who have been the victims of miscarriages of criminal justice. For more than a decade he has also been interested in the procedural reform represented by the declaratory judgment, and has done more to secure its adoption than any other person. The present monumental treatise on the subject is a fitting culmination of this activity.

The declaratory judgment is a procedural device to establish preventive justice, which in a civilized state is as essential as preventive medicine. It is intended to enable courts to give binding declarations of legal rights when these have in some manner been brought into question. Such power is an obvious mechanism of social appeasement, particularly important in a period of long-term legal relationships and intensive legislative activity. The adjudication of controversies before actual breach tends to prevent insecurity and uncertainty with respect to legal rights, and makes it possible to conduct litigation with some degree of objectivity and gentlemanliness. To be sure, even preventive litigation is a luxury with which most reasonable men would gladly dispense, but there can be no doubt that it is a lesser evil than the classic remedial lawsuit.

Yet the declaratory judgment in this country is entirely a post-war development. Like many American legal reforms it has had to wait upon the force of English example, although in Continental countries it has roots which go back to the Middle Ages. That such a useful procedural device should be so long in coming can be explained only by the mumbo-jumbo of the lawyers. With but a few exceptions the classic common law contemplated only judgments to which there was annexed a decree of execution. Because of the use of the expression "case and controversy" in American constitutional jargon, it was supposed that the declaratory judgment did not fall within the "judicial function." The courts could not be bothered with rendering "advisory opinions," although the declaratory judgment differs from the latter not only in its binding character but in the existence of an actual legal controversy. Curiously the declaratory judgment, far from representing a new element in the legal tradition, is actually a throwback to the ancient stage of legal history when the judgments of courts were primarily declaratory. The primitive judge who was little more than an arbitrator could declare the existence of rights, but against recalcitrant parties could enforce them, if at all, in only the most indirect fashion. As Professor Borchard well puts it: "A weak state dare not go beyond the judicial declaration of rights, whereas the modern strong state has no need to go beyond."

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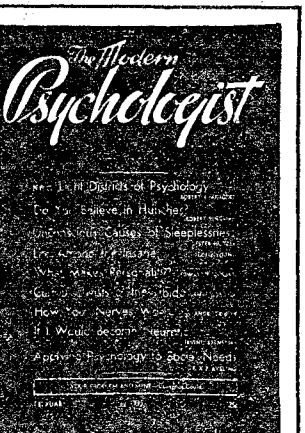

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Happily the early resistance to the introduction of the declaratory judgment has been largely overcome. It has been adopted to date in thirty-four states and territories, and a federal act was passed by the last Congress. Doubts of the constitutionality of the declaratory judgment have been almost entirely dissolved, although there is still some doubt as to the position which will be taken by the Supreme Court of the United States, which, overburdened as it is, may not welcome a further expansion of jurisdiction. Professor Borchard's treatise will be influential in the decision of this issue and in the development of practice under declaratory-judgment acts. Incidentally, the great need for the declaratory judgment is itself a rather sad commentary upon the quest for certainty which has dominated the legal systems of the West.

WILLIAM SEAGLE

Shorter Notices

The New Temple Shakespeare. Edited by M. R. Ridley. With Designs by Eric Gill. E. P. Dutton and Company. Forty Volumes. 65 cents each.

The Temple Shakespeare was popular, and so will this successor of it be, since the volumes are beautiful, small, readable, and cheap. The critical apparatus is slight sometimes to the point of perfunctoriness, but that will help rather than hinder the general reader, who nevertheless may benefit by Mr. Ridley's novel device of arranging his glossary in the order in which the words to be glossed occur, thus calling attention to certain usages which are less understandable than they appear. Mr. Ridley is so far up to date as to have followed Dover Wilson in the choice of the second Quarto of "Hamlet" for his text of that play, and to have incorporated some of Mr. Wilson's emendations. But here and there he abandons the Quarto text without explanation, and from Hamlet's famous exclamation, "What a piece of work is a man!", he unfortunately omits the first article. Seventeen volumes of the forty are now available; the rest are promised by the end of the year.

Letters of Laurence Sterne. Edited by Lewis Perry Curtis. Oxford University Press. $10.50.

This would appear to be as complete a collection of Sterne's correspondence as ten years of search by the editor could make it. The total is 222 letters, ten of these being new and all of them being annotated with great fulness. The volume, indeed, is in effect a critical biography of Sterne, whose "Journal to Eliza" and "Memoirs" find their place in it as a matter of course, and whose character emerges here quite intimately and entirely. Anyone who has been curious concerning Sterne's relations with other women than his wife—Mrs. Draper and Kitty Fourmantel particularly—will learn from this book all that can be known two centuries after. Mr. Curtis's reasons for excluding forty-seven letters as forgeries by William Combe are on the whole convincing; and so is he convincing in his theory that Sterne's daughter pieced together the first famous letter to her mother out of plagiarisms from the "Journal to Eliza." It has hitherto been supposed that Sterne himself borrowed from the letter for the "Journal." By and large the volume meets the highest standards of editing set by any contemporary university press.

Weep Not for the Dead. By Michel Matveev. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

In more than one way Michel Matveev's "Weep Not for the Dead" is a remarkable narrative. Humanly speaking, it is a heart-breaking story of persecution and pain; technically, it is an astonishing tour de force. Told in the first person by a

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Jewish ballad singer, it has all the monotonous agony of a Jewish chant. A family of Jews is driven out of Russia by the post-war pogroms to seek peace and security in Palestine, but is never lucky enough to glimpse the Promised Land. In Rumania, in Greece, and in Egypt, its members are hunted down, spied upon, tortured, imprisoned, with endless, unbelievable regularity, until at last by chance they find a doubtful haven in alien France. This saga of Jewish woe is not so much a novel as it is a lamentation. Characterization, plot, intellection have no place in it; it is all feeling. Its protagonists are faceless, nameless; their personalities are blotted out by the utter, doglike misery which is their common attribute. From the first shrill sentence to the last, Matveev pounds the same, excruciating chord. In the whole of this exhausting novel there is not one moment of resignation, of relaxation of suffering. "Weep Not for the Dead" is a feat of endurance. One may be offended by the continual, abject self-pity in which Matveev wallows, but one cannot fail to be impressed by his virtuosity.

Westering. By Thomas Hornsby Ferril. Yale University Press. $2.

The reader of this book will understand why Sandburg and Frost, as the blurb says, admire Ferril. He views the world, especially the Western world of New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas, with fresh eyes. Many of his long, rather loose blank-verse poems have a surprising folk quality. Mr. Ferril like Lindsay and Sandburg is a myth-maker for America. He knows the feel of his country, records its history, gives sharp impressions of its peoples, retells its legends. He does not possess the lyric gift; he has neither the economy of expression nor the sense of form of the technically good poet. But he is a good story-teller, he has eyes in his head to see things sharply, and he has an amazing feeling for the arid and dramatic landscapes of the West.

Drama

What of It?

THE popular English novelist E. M. Delafield is responsible for a fairly pleasant but extremely tranquil little play at the Ethel Barrymore Theater. "To See Ourselves" is the title, and the story concerns itself with a very familiar situation—the romantic woman married to a kind but unromantic husband. She almost rebels, and then decides that she had better not. Her husband makes a feeble effort to do better but doesn't. And that is the play.

It was, I believe, very popular in London, where they like those undramatic dramas whose chief distinction seems to be the care which is taken to prevent anything from really happening and whose chief originality seems to consist in the unprecedented extent to which a familiar situation is toned down. There are, of course, various ways in which the theme that this play so mildly suggests has been made to yield very striking effects. Flaubert, for example, by a remorseless concentration upon one aspect of romantic discontent, not only wrote a great novel but succeeded in imposing the name bovarism upon one of its forms. On the other hand, Sir James Barrie —for whose dramaturgy I make no general defense—espoused the romantic point of view in order to produce in "What Every Woman Knows" a *locus classicus* for the defense of the theory that women are delicately sensitive and imaginative beings doomed to make the poor best they can of the stupid creatures composing the only other sex which God in his carelessness provided to procreate their children. But Miss Delafield—and in this she is typical of a whole generation of British playwrights—will not go as far as either. Neither, of course, will she imitate the innumerable plays in which the outraged wife kicks over the traces and runs off with someone more capable of appreciating her needs. Nice people like those with whom Miss Delafield deals don't do such things, just as sensible authors like herself do not feel as strongly as Flaubert or Barrie about romantic wives or anything else. Hence her play is a play about a woman whose dissatisfaction fell just short of the point where it would have caused her to do something, and the conclusion to be drawn is that if women would learn to expect a very little bit less from husbands, who might possibly give a very little bit more, then it would not be necessary to write any more plays even as mild as this one.

The English attitude seems to be that such works as the present should be praised for being so sensible in attitude and so true to the life of the average man and woman of the middle class. They are generally less enthusiastically commended in New York, since Americans still cling to the idea that if a play is about completely undistinguished people, it ought either to say something original about them or at least say something unusually well. Mr. Van Druten once wrote a piece which he called "After All," but which, so it seemed to me, would have been more appropriately entitled "What of It?" "To See Ourselves" produced much the same impression, for the simple reason that the author seems only to be saying very quietly what everybody knows. Patricia Collinge does everything she can do to make the thoroughly commonplace wife interesting, and the rest of the cast is good. But it is hard to become much concerned over something which doesn't happen to a set of very undistinguished characters.

"Something Gay" (Morosco Theater) is a rather wobbly farce-comedy which would be nothing without Tallulah Bankhead. What it is with her will depend largely upon one's taste. She is attractive and often amusing, but to me her spontaneity seems extraordinarily premeditated and her impulsiveness very carefully thought out beforehand.

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

Contributors to This Issue

THOMAS O. SHEPARD is a Chicago journalist who has written extensively on financial matters.

LOUIS FISCHER, *The Nation's* Moscow correspondent, has recently published a new book on Russia, "Soviet Journey."

BENJAMIN STOLBERG, coauthor with Warren Vinton of "The Economic Consequences of the New Deal," is commenting regularly in *The Nation* on current American developments.

KENNETH BURKE is the author of "Permanence and Change."

JAMES RORTY, author of "Our Master's Voice: Advertising," spent last winter in the West investigating social and economic conditions.

LUDWIG LORE, formerly the editor of the New York *Volkszeitung*, now conducts a daily column, "Behind the Cables," in the New York *Post*.

REINHOLD NIEBUHR, professor of applied Christianity at the Union Theological Seminary, is the author of "Reflections on the End of an Era."

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